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Harkaway on Magic Island.



"For the third time, will you speak or die?" said the pirate.

CHAPTER I.

ADVENTURES IN MAGIC ISLAND—A SAD BEGINNING—EXTRAORDINARY FESTIVITIES IN THE WOOD.

THEY heard poor Monday's signal below, but before they could render him any assistance, the chances are that his own prophecy would be realized—that his head would make the third ghastly trophy in that grim scene.

"Hark!" said Mr. Jefferson, "do you hear?"

"Yes; it is Monday."

"He is hurt."

"Or has long odds to meet," suggested Harvey.

"I should like to be in his place then," said Mr. Mole, grandly.

"No doubt."

"Now, gentlemen," said the American doctor, "the cry we heard sounded like some one in distress, and if we are to render any assistance to our faithful friend, we must be quick."

Harkaway blew an answer to Monday's signal.

"Hark!"

They listened for a reply.

But listened in vain.

After a minute or two's ominous silence, they began to look at each other, with long faces.

They said nothing, but they all felt that some fresh calamity was threatening.

They did not dare to speak their thoughts. They feared that poor Monday had shared Spirillo's fate.

"Halt," said Jack; "I will sound the signal once more."

No answer.

"This looks bad for poor Monday," said Harkaway; "we must be quick, gentlemen."

He then led the way up the hights, from the

opposite side to that which Monday had started from.

They went up in skirmishing order, Mike being generally selected to lead the van.

Mike trudged on.

He knew he had serious work to do.

The grave faces of his friends and patrons impressed him deeply; for a most impressionable dog was Mike.

In skirmishing order they mounted the heights, until Mr. Mole was forced to pull up for assistance.

"Harvey," he groaned.

"What is it, Mr. Mole?" asked Dick.

"With my infirmity I can't make headway."

"Footway you mean, sir," suggested Harvey, looking at Mole's legs.

Mr. Mole frowned at Dick, who, however, remained perfectly serious.

"I slip as I go on, Harvey," he said.

"One step forward and two back?" suggested Harvey.

"Yes."

"As if it was on a glacier?"

"Exactly."

"I know what you want, then, Mr. Mole."

"Indeed?"

"Yes; you want roughing."

"What?"

"Roughing, sir, about the feet, depend upon it," said Dick.

"Mr. Harvey, I must beg you to be more respectful in your manner."

"No disrespect, sir," said Harvey, "none whatever. Allow me."

And he stooped to lift up one of Mr. Mole's timber toes.

Dick was actually treating Mr. Mole as a farrier would a horse.

Mole would have resented the liberty thus taken with him, but Dick had him by the leg.

So, to save himself from falling, he had to clutch his tormentor around the shoulders for support.

Dick examined the bottom of the wooden limb with a critical air.

"Yes," he said, "a nail in each of those will convert Mr. Mole into a pair of perambulating alpenstocks."

"Think so, Harvey?"

"Yes. Happy thought. Keep steady, sir!"

For the sake of the advantage to be gained the tutor submitted to the operation, and soon Mr. Mole was firmer at each step than any member of the party, and through that simple operation.

A nail was driven into the tip of each wooden leg, and the spikes dug in the ground, preventing slipping.

And Isaac Mole smiled with gratification, as he went, even condescending to approve, in a patronizing manner, of Dick's small pleasantries at his expense.

* * * * *

What was that?

The dog Mike growled.

There was a general halt.

Every hand grasped a weapon with a nervous grip, as if in instant expectation of being called upon to use it.

Mike went on a few paces further, and then sniffed the ground and began to paw the earth.

They stooped to look at what excited the intelligent canine's attention.

The ground was moist in a round, hollow place, and when they approached to examine it closely, they discovered that the moisture was blood.

"See here!" exclaimed Harkaway, "there has been foul play."

"Yes, no doubt," said Harvey; "look, the blood extends along here."

"Blood."

"Blood!" echoed every one, in one voice as it were.

"Is it Monday's?"

A shudder went through the whole assemblage.

Poor Monday!

Could they have only known of his piteous plight, and how close he was to them at that moment, what would they have done?

And yet poor Monday was close upon the spot. They might have seen the luckless and faithful Prince of Limbi stretched upon the ground, scarcely any life to speak of in him.

They would have seen a dark-visaged Greek, hovering near, knife in hand, ready to take what life yet remained in that poor motionless body. Twice had that murderous-looking Greek crept out to wreak his vengeance upon the hapless Monday.

Twice had he been startled by a strange noise, that he could by no means understand, but he

now, with a firm step, ventured out, knife in hand.

It looked bad for Monday now.

He knelt over the senseless Limbian, and felt his heart, and then tried various parts of his body for a pulse.

But he tried in vain.

There must have been very little—if any—life in poor, unlucky Monday by this time.

Then finding Monday as lifeless as he could wish, he bared his throat, and felt the edge of his knife.

He set to work now.

With brutal left hand, he thrust back the destined victim's chin, with his right he brought the long, ugly knife close to the throat.

"Your head," he said, looking with fierce eyes at Monday, "shall deck another pole."

"Ha—ha!"

A wild cry escaped him.

Some invisible foe had dragged him by the hair with such fierceness, that it seemed as though his scalp was coming away.

He dropped his knife, and clapped his hand to the injured part.

"Ha—ha!"

He yelled again and again, and the harder he yelled, the harder did this unseen enemy drag.

He wrestled mightily with the foe, nevertheless, and suddenly wriggling himself around, he caught a glimpse of his assailant.

Now that glimpse filled his very soul with fear.

His only thought was that the evil one had come to claim his own at last.

So desperate did his struggles now become, that he actually tore himself away, leaving a good handful of his gory locks in the hands of the enemy, and as he got free, he turned to the thicket just at the very instant that a man—Magog Brand—appeared in the opening.

Magog cocked his rifle and blazed away after him.

The ruffian did not get altogether clear off.

The shot took effect in his left ham, but so far on the side, that it made a narrow fissure in his flesh, and passed on without resting in his body.

"Ha—ha!"

And he howled more than ever as he made his escape.

"Look, here is poor Monday," cried Brand.

They were right glad when they came up to poor Monday.

"What do you say, doctor?" asked Harkaway, eagerly. "Is he dangerously hurt?"

The doctor paused.

He looked grave, then said:

"He will live."

"Thank Heaven!" ejaculated Harkaway, fervently.

"Amen!" said Dick.

They had been through so many perils and troubles together, in many lands, that they felt the greatest affection for their dear old friend and companion, whose friendship they had made under circumstances of no ordinary danger.

"He has had a very ugly blow," said the American doctor, with a serious air, "and his recovery will certainly take a long while."

"We must get him back to the ship," said Harkaway.

"Shall we all go?"

"No need for that," said Jack Harkaway; "let four of the party be told off for the service, and two more serve as escort; this will be all that is necessary."

They set to work hurriedly to construct a litter, and then they bore the poor fellow tenderly away.

But while this was proceeding, Mr. Jefferson was looking about in anxious inquiry.

"What is it, Jefferson?" cried Harkaway.

"Where's Mole?"

"Mr. Mole!" Jack shouted.

Isaac Mole was somehow or other absent.

"Where was he last seen?"

"Who saw him last?"

There were plenty to put this question, but few were in a position to answer it.

At length one of the sailors volunteered a little information.

"Where did you see him, Ben?" asked Harkaway.

"Why, your honor," answered the honest tar, "he fell out to refresh."

"Refresh?"

"What, to drink?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well," ejaculated Jefferson, "that's a big joke, I reckon."

"Don't think he'll find it one," said Magog Brand.

"Poor old Mole," said Dick Harvey; "one or two of us ought to hark back and look about for him."

"Ay, ay?"

"Who'll go with me?"

"I will, your honor," said Ben Hawser, "if so be as it ain't again the rules, for I shouldn't like to see the schoolmaster come to grief—damme?"

"Off with you then," said Harkaway. "But pray use every caution."

"Trust me."

"Be sure to give the signal in case of danger."

"I will."

"And now you return as quickly as you can to the ship, with all care for your patient."

"Yes."

And so they started off.

* * * * *

The disappointed ruffian, who had to beat a retreat, crawled through the thicket and got out of danger.

Moaning and groaning, he went on all fours.

He had got an ugly gash on the head, that he owed to Monday in their skirmish; he had lost a tuft of hair, and in addition to this, he had received a bullet wound in the haunch, which left him very unhappy indeed.

Chairs were scarce in Magic Island, but if they had had them in plenty, this unhappy wretch could not have ventured to have enjoyed one.

And as he crawled along, he came suddenly upon a remarkable object.

It was nothing less than a man squatting upon the ground sucking ardent liquor from a bottle.

"This man's face was flushed."

His nose was tipped with a ruddy glow.

His eyes sparkled brilliantly, and he rocked to and fro as he sat.

Now when the wounded ruffian approached, the carouser looked up, and fixing his eyes upon him, said:

"Come and sit down, the pair of you, and don't get dancing round and round like that, you'll gid getty—that is, get giddy. Come, come, old fellow an' liquor up."

And then he burst out into a bacchanalian chant, which surprised the new comer:

"Gaily now my moments roll,
While I quaff the bowing fowl,
Care shall never touch Ike Mole,
If he deeply, deeply drinks his grog."

"He—he—he! my cheerful pal. Gently; don't waltz around like that, but come and have a pull. Sit down, both of you; this is a free an' easy, an' not a dance—he—he!"

CHAPTER II.

MR. MOLE IN HIS WAR-PAINT—HIS BRUSH WITH THE ENEMY.

THE Greek ruffian looked more alarmed at Mr. Mole than if the latter had shown fight.

The probability is, that he took the worthy man for a magician, and thought that his Bacchanalian ditty was an incantation.

"Come and sit down, ole f'lar," said Mr. Mole, waving his hand; "chake a tair—that ish takes shair—scuse my speeth—spe—speech—I've been shofferin' so with toothache that it'sh quite affected my talking; it's made my head bad too—precious bad—must have it off—pah—ha! Come an' sit down an' make yourselves happy!"

Then he looked about him with tipsy gravity.

"Where'sh the other?"

No answer coming, he went on:

"Mo'strorary—can't make where'sh thother. Come an' sit down—what'll you take?"

He made no effort to rise.

Thereupon the Greek drew his knife.

Now, far gone as he was, Isaac Mole knew what that meant.

So he felt for his revolver and cocked it.

But he might as well have cocked a champagne bottle.

His revolver was filled with whiskey, which had leaked from a bottle, and the weapon was of no use.

The ruffian, seeing the revolver, grew awfully frightened.

He dropped his knife on the ground, and bowed in the most extravagant token of submission.

"Quite sho," said Isaac Mole; "come sit down, you ugly ruffian, or I shall shoot you."

Apparently the Greek did not understand the words, but the gestures accompanying the speech were full of meaning.

So down he dropped immediately, facing Mr. Mole.

"Now, take a pull at this, you vagabond," said the latter, handing him the cup off his flask full of liquor.

"The other gave him a Greek 'Thank you,' and took a good draught at the cup.

Then he coughed, and spluttered, and nearly choked, for it was over-proof whiskey—neat, that Mr. Mole had been drinking.

The Greek had not tasted whiskey before.

And when he recovered his breath, he got on his feet and seized his knife again.

His eyes were half starting out from their sockets, and his face was blood-red.

Some violent ejaculations in his own tongue burst from him, and he made a rush at the astonished Mr. Mole.

The latter would have been in a sorry predicament, but for a singular accident.

He lifted his right leg to ward off the assault, and, as the Greek made a wild rush, he spiked himself on the nail that tipped the timber-toe—Dick Harvey's roughing.

"Aha!" cried the Greek.

And down he dropped his knife, as the pain of his hurt from the nail doubled him up.

Mr. Mole valiantly lunged out again, and this time caught the Greek upon the neck.

"What are you howling at?" said Mole; but he was partly sobered by what he had seen, for it was rather a startling job, and so with commendable presence of mind, he followed his success sharply up.

He first secured the Greek's knife and his own revolver, and then he rushed at the enemy.

The latter, having received half an inch of rusty nail in the neck, had been knocked over, but scrambling to his feet, he made off just as Mr. Mole remorselessly prodded him behind with his right leg—and right nail.

"Aha! Oho! Hoha!" yelled the Greek.

And he rushed away shrieking with fear; for Mr. Mole had "landed him" in a sore spot—the fissure in his ham that had been made by Magog Brand's bullet.

At the very moment that he disappeared, Dick Harvey, guided by the noise, rushed up to Mole.

"Halloo!" cried Dick, anxiously, "are you safe?"

"And sound," said Mole.

"Thank Heaven for that," said Harvey. "You gave us a precious fright, but we thought we heard a noise."

Mr. Mole smiled.

"My dear Harvey," said Mr. Mole, "I like to take the foe single-handed."

"What!"

"I have met the foe!"

"Never!"

"I have—and conquered," said Mr. Mole. "It is true," he added, moodily, "they were not in force—there were, in fact, only five of them."

"Five?"

"Yes, only five."

"You met them single-handed?"

"Of course."

"And fought?"

"Very much fought, of course."

"And you beat them all off?"

"Still more of course."

"Well," said Harvey, "well, you are a brave man, sir."

"Did you ever know me to turn my back to the foe?"

"No."

"I thought not."

"Nor your face either," muttered Dick.

Yet he was puzzled; for he certainly had heard cries as he came up.

"I have fought and conquered," said Isaac Mole, with a flourish; "behold the spoils of victory."

And he showed the knife that the frightened brigand had left behind him in his flight.

"Well done, Mr. Mole," said Brand.

"The brave Mole was alone, single-handed," said Harvey.

"Where are your victims?" inquired Brand.

"I can't say; the whole seven of them fled, scattered like chaff before the wind, and by this mighty arm alone."

"Seven!" said Harvey.

"Seven," said Mr. Mole, with serious emphasis.

"You said five."

"Five," exclaimed Mr. Mole, with considerable readiness, "five fought; the other two can scarcely have been said to fight."

"How so?"

"Five of the poor scared wretches cut up so miserably bad, that the other two were quite demoralised, so I let one off with a prod in the ribs from my leg."

"Very kind."

"But the other got one from my fist that made him swallow six of his teeth."

"Did you also make them eat their heads?" asked Brand.

"Oh—oh—oh!" groaned the party in chorus.

"The Greek might have swallowed his teeth," said Dick, "but Mr. Mole will never expect us to swallow his tale."

"Mr. Harvey!" said Mole in great indignation.

"In point of fact," said Dick, laughing, "Mr. Mole's peculiar romance suggests a riddle."

"A riddle?"

"Yes."

"Let's have it," said Magog Brand, smelling fun.

"It is this," said Harvey. "Why is a tooth like a lie?"

"Give it up."

"Because it's a Mole-ar."

CHAPTER III.

THE TIGER'S LAIR—DOWN IN THE EARTH.

THE Greek pirate, whom Mr. Mole had vanquished, fled to the thickest part of the wood.

And when he had ascertained that he was free from pursuit, he made his way to a spot, where, cleverly concealed in the shrubs from even a close scrutiny, was a large, flat slab of stone, with an iron ring sunk in it.

This he raised.

Beneath was a flight of roughly-cut steps that went down into the earth at least twenty feet.

The Greek stepped down and replaced the stone after him.

This done, he descended the steps, and passed along a narrow, vaulted passage, dark and gloomy, and furnished with a miserable, flickering lamp of bad oil at intervals of twenty yards.

At the end of this passage he came to a barred gateway of great solidity, where he knocked four times loudly.

The gate was opened by a thick-set man, of weird and savage aspect.

A man whose age it was not easy to guess at from his appearance.

This man addressed the new-comer in Italian.

"Who's there?"

"It is I, Stavros; is Monastos within?"

"Yes."

"Good. Keep a strict watch here, and mind what you are about. There are enemies abroad," said Stavros, seriously.

"Enemies?" repeated the other, looking blank.

"Ay, enemies, and clever enemies, too, crafty, cunning enemies that get up to tricks; enemies to avoid, enemies to fear."

"Fear!"

And then he aroused himself a bit and stared.

"Ay, fear."

He nodded with a deal of significance, and repeated Stavros' last words, as the latter pushed on his way along the low, vaulted passage.

This second passage was about thirty yards long, and was guarded by a second door more massive than the first.

Passing through this, he came to a low vaulted cavern.

This opened out into a larger vault or cave.

In this cave there was a thick-set man with an iron-grey beard, and weather-beaten face that told of exposure to wind, and rain, and sun, for many a long year.

This man was slightly above the middle height, and appeared to be the principal person in the company present.

He was busily employed in superintending the loading of pistols, and polishing of steel arms of various makes and descriptions, while the bulk of the work was being performed by two men.

Near them was a beautiful girl.

The two men were evidently of a very low type; but there was an unmistakably superior look about the girl.

The other man, he of the iron-grey beard, was between forty and fifty years of age.

His closely-knit frame spoke of great bodily strength.

To the left of the door by which Stavros had entered was a vaulted aperture, beyond which could be seen the daylight faintly glistening through a dense foliage.

At this entrance stood two armed sentries.

Silent.

Motionless.

The table was prepared in the center of the cavern, and was already creaking and groaning under a profusion of riches that were in strange contrast with the wild and rugged appearance of the dwelling itself.

Rich wines and fruits were there in abundance, and in endless variety, and the service was of gold plate.

There was the finest table-linen, and, in fine, every luxury of civilization and wealth.

So extraordinary did it look in such a place that it would sorely have puzzled any of the

Harkaway party, could they have pierced that jealously-guarded entrance.

What would they have thought it was like?

It recalled, more than aught else, a scene in a pantomime opening, where the change from gay to grave, from banqueting halls of dazzling light to the haunts of demon miners, is performed in a slipshod manner by the slow scene-shifters, and the festive board is left forgotten, long after the brilliant walls and flashing mirrors have given place to the dismal cavern "flat."

Stavros stared at the preparations for the feast and his eyes glistened.

"Captain Monastos!" he said, or rather gasped—for he was nearly done up with his late exertions.

"Stavros, you here!"

The captain turned in surprise as the latter entered.

Stavros dropped upon a cushion that lay nearly at his feet.

But he rolled over with a cry of pain.

He had fallen upon the wound that he owed to Magog Brand's unerring rifle.

Monastos and the rest of the people gathered around him.

"What is it, Stavros?" asked the Greek captain, "are you hurt?"

"I am."

"Badly?"

"I fear so."

"Is it this cut you have in the neck and head?"

"That is not the worst, captain," replied Stavros. "I am faint with the loss of blood and fatigue."

"Faint!" said Monastos. "Give him some wine."

This was obeyed.

A large goblet of silver was filled to the brim with rich wine.

The parched Stavros drank it to the very dregs.

Monastos stooped and hastily examined the hurt upon his head.

"This is a bad knock," said he, "but it is by no means dangerous."

"That is not all," said Stavros. "I'm shot!"

"Shot?"

"Ay."

"Not in the chest or body?" said Monastos, anxiously.

"No," replied Stavros, hesitating.

And looking up at the girl who was looking down upon him, full of solicitude for him—

"I am shot—in the rear."

"This shall be seen to at once," said Monastos.

"Paquita!"

"Yes, father," said the girl.

"Go and prepare a bed for Stavros in the adjoining chamber, as soft as possible, my child."

"Yes, father."

"Now tell me, Stavros," said the pirate and brigand chief, eagerly, as his daughter disappeared, "are they in force?"

"Yes."

"How many?"

"Thirty, at least."

Monastos burst out laughing at this.

"Thirty?" he ejaculated. "Why, Stavros, we shall eat thirty in an hour."

"Not thirty of this breed," replied Stavros, "for take my word for it, they are thirty devils."

CHAPTER IV.

THE BANQUET HALL—PETRUS THE IDIOT AND HIS TWIN BLOODHOUNDS—HUNTING A MAN—ON THE SCENT.

"HA-ha-ha!" laughed the brigand chief. "Why, you are getting quite jocular, Stavros."

"Wait till you have heard all," replied the latter.

"If thirty devils should come to attack us, my word upon it, our brave, if small, force will soon put them to flight."

"Perhaps."

"Or provide them with graves," added the brigand chief, fiercely. Then he continued:

"The information is, I admit, to a certain extent, serious, although not anything as serious as you would lead us to believe."

"Good."

And Stavros looked as savage as a bear. He had been doing all the work and receiving all the hard knocks up to the present.

"Before you treat this matter lightly, captain," said Stavros, "you should be sure that you may not have cause to weep."

The captain frowned.

"You are growing rather daring, Stavros," he said.

Captain Monastos looked a bit serious now.

"Come—come," he said, "tell me all."
 "Well, in the first place, they have got a monkey dressed like a man that fights for them."

"A monkey?" ejaculated Monastos.
 "Yes."
 "But surely a monkey can't be a dangerous enemy. He is not one of the devils?"
 "I don't know that. He looks more like the evil one than any man could."

This made the brigand captain laugh.
 "Well, you may be right there, Stavros," he said; "but why not knock this monkey on the head?"

Stavros laughed now.
 A wild, sardonic grin it was, too.
 "Easily said."
 "Not so easily done?"
 "Not quite. Why, you can't get near him; I couldn't so much as touch his tail."

"Then surely you could knock him over with a bullet?"
 "He's bullet proof," said Stavros, with great gravity; "you will have an opportunity of judging for yourself before long, no doubt."

"We shall see."
 "Besides this, they have a very dangerous help in the shape of a little dog; don't laugh yet, until you have heard why he is such a dangerous help. This dog is trained to nose out everything that his master wants him to find. We had them covered in the ravine with our rifles; we could have picked them off one after the other; not one would have got through the pass alive, or at least unhurt."

"Well—well," exclaimed Monastos, eagerly.
 "The dog smelt us—hang him—and warned them, and not one was scratched. Besides this, they have two negro scouts, who are as daring as forty devils."

The captain's face grew more serious.
 "Scouts?"
 "Yes."
 "Then we must look after them; they shall have our first care."

There was a murderous significance in his manner as he said this.
 "That is not all," said Stavros.
 "What more can there be?"

"They have a dwarf that looks like an unnatural imp, and who shot me without aiming at me."

"Have they anything else to mention besides their regular men?" asked the pirate captain.
 "Yes; they have a man who has no legs."

"No legs?"
 "No."
 "Well, then he can't do much damage."

Stavros clapped his hands to his two wounded parts, yet smarting with the stabs that the inebriated Mole had inflicted upon him with his "roughing."

"You wouldn't say that if you had been in my place?"
 "How? Why, surely a legless man can't have done you any harm?"

"Legless," said Stavros, "in a manner of speaking. His legs are gone, it is true, but they are replaced by stilts of wood, and fitted into the ends are sharp blades. Now this man can hop as if his body were upon springs, hop wonderful distances, and use one of his legs like a lance, and a devilish ugly weapon it makes."

He groaned as he rubbed the wounded parts that were souvenirs of Isaac Mole's prowess.

Captain Monastos opened his eyes wide in wonder.

"Well, Stavros," he said, rather more seriously, "I confess that it does make a queer list, after all—a monkey, a dog, two negro scouts, a dwarf that shoots around the corner, and a springy man mounted upon lances."

"I thought you would say so."

"Indeed, I do."

"But wait until you have come in contact with them yourself."

"Yes, wait," said the captain, significantly; "I have already thought of the two negroes, and how to dispose of them to advantage."

"How?"
 "We have two faithful friends who do not object to the taste of negro flesh."

"The taste?"
 "Yes; Castor and Cyrus, you may remember."

"The bloodhounds?"
 "Yes."

"One of the negroes is already beyond harm, unless I am very much mistaken."

"How?"
 "I have seen to him."

"Have you met and fought with him?"
 "I have. Listen, captain."

"Go on."

"Costantino met the first of their party, a

traitor, who ventured here, lurked behind him upon the wooded heights, then pounced upon him, and chopped him down to his death."

"Good!" cried Monastos. "That's brave."
 "Wait, captain. He was a brave fellow, Costantino, was he not?"
 "He was."

"Well, Costantino killed the spy, and stuck his head upon a pole just on the spot where he fell."

"Bravo—bravo!" cried several of the brigands, gathering round as the wounded man's narrative increased in interest.

"Well. A warning to any who should dare to follow," said the chief.

"Yes."
 "Costantino shall find that I know how to reward my brave followers," said Captain Monastos, with the air of a grand monarch.

"He has already met with his reward," said Stavros.

"How? Speak!" Monastos ejaculated angrily.
 "Why mumble so in riddles? What reward can Costantino have met with already?"

"He met one of the negro scouts," answered Stavros; "met him upon the very spot where the head stood up as a warning."

"Say on."
 "They fought!"

"Costantino killed his man?" said the chief.
 "No. Costantino did not conquer."

"Confusion!" exclaimed Monastos; "then he—"

"Is dead; killed by the black scout."
 A groan came from the pirates.

"His head now replaces that of the first man—the spy who had the temerity to venture into the tiger's den; and what's more, I believe two of our band are killed."

"Then, Stavros," said the brigand captain, with a stern air of determination, "the man had better be at the bottom of the sea, than face my vengeance; for I swear—"

"I have already begun that task," said Stavros; "the murderer of Costantino has that which he will not forget, and, but that I was interrupted, I would have settled his account with life to-day."

"Good, Stavros," said the captain, gloomily.
 "My men shall be bitterly avenged. Go on. Tell me how you fared while encountering this African savage."

"I had his throat and head at my mercy, when that demon ape fell upon me."

"The ape!"
 "Ay! He is as big as man."

"And the black scout got off?"
 "He did; but not before I had avenged poor Costantino. He was yet living when I left him, but to his grave he will carry my marks."

"Bravo!"
 "That is something," exclaimed the brigand captain, exultingly; "but you should have killed him outright, even had it cost you your life."

Stavros frowned.

"Of what nation were they?" asked the pirate chief.

"English," said Stavros.
 The captain was silent.

It was a position of difficulty.

Stavros was quite right, when he said that his captain had not seen the full danger of the position.

"I do not like the English," said Monastos; "we must look well to our arms, and see that they do not escape us."

The force under Jack Harkaway as now composed was indeed a formidable array.

Craft, wit, strength, were all and each amply represented.

They possessed men of daring beyond anything that their enemies contemplated.

Of their enterprise and ability they had already given good proofs.

* * * * *

"Tell us, Stavros, which way are they marching now?" asked Monastos.

"By the ravine path, thence by the main route."

"Good."

"The negro who is yet safe and sound, is, or was, lost in the wooded height on the right of the ravine."

The brigand captain jumped up at this.

"That's the idea, then," he said; "let us cut them off in detail, kill them off one by one, these cursed English."

"Good."

"The first thing, then," said the brigand captain, "is to send the twin bloodhounds to me."

"What, Castor and Cyrus?"
 "Yes."

"Huzzah!" cried Stavros, half rising from the

ground, and waving his hand. "You fill me with hope; send the hounds hither that I may look upon them before they go."

The next minute, a deep baying sound was heard, and one of the brigands brought in a pair of immense bloodhounds leashed together.

The man who brought them in, was the big, sullen man who guarded the first gate by which Stavros had entered the brigand fastness.

The man with the tawny beard and unkempt hair, whose looks of intelligence were but transient, and whose expression was generally vacant.

A man whose mind was a blank, one who could happily forget the past, at times, for his past was brim full of painful recollections.

"Ah, Petrus," said Monastos, "bring them here."

Petrus led them up to the captain, and let go. The captain half drew his pistols.

"Keep them well in hand," said he; "they are not muzzled."

"Fear not."

"Nay, I don't fear them," said Monastos, with an uneasy look; "only they never seem to take kindly to me."

"There's no danger," said Petrus, carelessly.

And without more ado he set them at liberty. Immediately, one crawled to the brigand chief, and growled ominously.

The captain was no coward, and did not fear meeting in combat any two men, yet somehow, those fierce bloodhounds made him unhappy.

He would sooner face three men in single combat, than one of those fierce hounds.

He made a movement as though to chastise the dog, when at once it crouched to spring.

There was no mistaking this action.

His tail moved uneasily from side to side, and he looked full of fire.

The strange man they called Petrus seemed to watch with joy the hostile movements of the bloodhounds against the pirate and brigand captain.

"Call them off," cried the captain, "quick!"

"Castor," cried Petrus, angrily. "Come here, sir."

The noble beast turned with a whine to his keeper.

"Come—come," said Petrus; "good dog. Kiss me."

Thereupon, the hound leaped into his arms, opened to receive him, and caressed him eagerly.

He must have been a powerful fellow, indeed, to stand the shock of this huge animal.

But it did not even shake him, to all appearance.

"Petrus."
 "Hola."

"Fetch this other hound from me; the brute smells the blood, I am sure, and he looks as though he were ready to eat me."

It was Stavros.

Cyrus did, indeed, hover around the wounded brigand, as though he would have relished a meal off him.

The wounds of the poor wretch were full of fragrance for Cyrus, as you might perceive by the greedy way in which he licked his fangs.

"Now, you, Cyrus," cried Petrus, and the second hound also came quickly to his side, licking his hands.

"Bring them something to eat," said Monastos.

No sooner said than done.

A large wooden dish filled with meat and bones was placed in the middle of the floor, and the two bloodhounds flew to it.

But not to touch a morsel.

"Here," cried Petrus in a voice of thunder.

The hounds slunk back, and crouching with deep humility, they dragged their bellies along the ground to their master.

The rest of the brigands looked on astounded.

"You have them well in hand. It is marvellous," said Monastos.

"There appears to be a sort of understanding between them," said the wounded man.

"Yes. There is a species of affinity between an Englishman and a dog," said the captain, frowning.

Yells of laughter greeted this witticism.

And while they laughed, the half savage Petrus looked up, his eyes flashing fire for an instant.

But the gleam was only momentary.

It faded away, and was soon replaced by the regular vacant stare.

"Quite right, Captain Monastos," he said with a mad laugh. "Quite right. You are a brave man, and a wit. I am only an Englishman."

"You English are all dogs," said Monastos.

"Yes," said Petrus, staring vacantly at the ground, "I suppose that I am the next thing

to a dog myself, and that is why I took so readily to you."

"Silence, dog," said the captain, "and start your twin beauties on the hunt. A nigger is in your quarry, my brave Castor, and my doughty Cyrus. Hunt him down. Tear him piecemeal, and you shall have a meal to your liking. Real nigger black pudding. Ha, ha!"

Off they started with the hounds.

Poor Sunday was in jeopardy now.

Before the twin bloodhounds had been out half an hour, they were upon the scent, and following it eagerly, with their noses to the ground.

"The dogs are on the scent," said Petrus, "and the poor wretch will be torn in shreds."

CHAPTER V.

BAD NEWS ON BOARD—IN THE STILL NIGHT—THUS BEGINS THE VENGEANCE OF MONASTOS.

ON board the *Westward Ho!* they were anything but comfortable.

Hilda was full of uneasiness, little Emily was never tired of uttering her misgivings about young Jack, and Mrs. Harkaway felt her own spirits sink more and more.

After the lapse of a few hours, a party of men was seen approaching the ship, bearing the body of poor Monday on a litter.

Ada ran forward to greet her faithful Monday, and received his inanimate form with deep emotion.

"Oh, my poor Monday—my poor Monday!" she cried. "What can I do to help you through this trouble?"

The wounded Prince of Limbi opened his eyes. "I am all right, Ada," said he, "only a little hurt."

"Only a little," she reiterated. "Why, Monday?"

"I sha'n't leave you a widow yet, Ada," said the faithful fellow, with a faint laugh.

Emily ran up.

Her face was pale.

She was no chicken-hearted woman.

She had been in too many stirring scenes of danger and trouble to feel alarmed now without ample cause.

"How are the others, my poor Monday?" asked Emily, eagerly.

"All right."

"No one hurt?"

"Not one."

"Ah!" she sighed, in deep relief.

"No," said he, "only poor unlucky Monday knocked out of the fun. Just my luck," he continued, with a groan. "That nigger Sunday has it all to himself; he'll have the laugh at me."

Would he?

Sunday's position at that particular moment was far from being enviable.

Poor Sunday!

At no period of his life had he been in such danger.

Little short of a miracle would it be if he chanced to get through it with life.

The enemies he had to encounter were formidable ones indeed.

But more of Sunday's adventures later on.

* * * * *

Monday's hurts happily proved to be of a far less serious nature than might have been supposed.

The consequence was that the faithful fellow made rapid progress, and so before he had been many hours on board, he began to entertain hopes of soon rejoining Harkaway and his adventurous party.

* * * * *

It was night.

The watch was set.

This watch was shared by Ben Hawser and the two lads, Jack Harkaway the younger and Harry Girdwood.

They were chatting in a half sleepy manner forward, when young Jack turned suddenly around and ejaculated:

"Do you hear that?"

"What?"

"That scraping noise?"

Harry listened for awhile, and then he said to his companion:

"You must be mistaken."

"I'm sure I was not. Hark!"

"I certainly heard something that time."

"What do you think it can be?" said young Jack.

"It sounds very like the cable being parted."

They listened in silence some considerable time, but the sounds were not renewed.

What could it mean? It was very perplexing.

Was there something wrong going forward—more evildoers lurking there? And had they been surprised by the vigilance of the watch!

To tell the honest truth, the awful and sudden end of poor Spirillo had in some degree startled the whole of the party.

Suddenly there was a strange, creaking noise, and the ship gave a lurch.

A lurch that would be nothing in the open sea, but which was enough to fill them with the greatest alarm, taking place in that sheltered creek, that was still as a mill-pond, with scarcely a ripple on its surface.

"Halloo, there!" cried Ben Hawser.

"What now?" said Jack.

"What can it mean?" said Harry Girdwood, anxiously.

The vessel groaned as she moved on apace.

"Why, stop my grog!" cried Ben Hawser, "if she aren't under way. There's something wrong here."

The two boys looked at each other with a bewildered air.

There was no mistaking the fact now.

The *Westward Ho!* was moving, gliding slowly along the water.

"By Heaven! you were right, Harry!" exclaimed young Jack; "the cable has been parted!"

Foul play!

For a few seconds they were quite staggered with this discovery.

But the gallant old tar, Ben Hawser, was the first to recover his presence of mind.

"Dammel!" he cried, "the enemy is up to divers' tricks."

"And sundry artifices," said young Jack, who had the true Harkaway relish for a joke.

Ben Hawser stepped over the bulwarks and slid down the rope to the water.

Then grasping the ship's chains, he groped along around the vessel.

Nearly the whole of his body was submerged, but, like a veteran sea-lion, he was prepared for any sudden emergency by contriving in spite of difficulties, to keep his powder dry.

And this is how he did it.

He carried his revolver in a stout leathern case, the lid of which he held in his teeth, and groping along thus, he presently came in sight of a dark form swimming at the head of the ship.

Drawing nearer, he contrived to see that it was a man.

He appeared to be holding on to something attached to the keel, which was invisible to Ben.

Nearer and nearer he crept, and then he made this alarming discovery.

"Why, the swab has chopped our cable, fastened on a line, and blow my bags if they aren't towing of us out. I'll make sure of that shark anyhow."

And then Ben showed the prudence of keeping his powder dry.

Poising himself with his left hand upon the ship's chains, he took the revolver in his right hand out of the leather case.

He straightened his arm and took a deliberate aim.

"Take that, you son of a sea-cook!" exclaimed honest Ben, and he pulled the trigger.

When the smoke of the shot cleared away, Ben Hawser's target had disappeared.

Simultaneously the *Westward Ho!* stopped in her mysterious passage.

It was very strange.

That one man could not be towing out the big ship single-handed.

Hercules himself could not have performed such a labor.

No; the only solution of this seeming mystery could be that Ben Hawser's shot had alarmed that man's accomplices, but Ben's attention was suddenly attracted above.

There was a great outcry upon the deck.

Back he scrambled, and clambered up the ship's side as nimbly as Nero himself could have done it.

Just as he reached the deck, he heard the sound of a girl's voice calling for help.

He ran across young Jack and Harry Girdwood.

They were rushing along the deck in the greatest excitement.

Consternation was depicted upon every countenance.

"It's all right, Master Jack," said Ben Hawser; "we put an end to their towing out."

He attributed all the commotion to the exciting scene that had taken place below, in which he

had been the principal actor, but in this he was very speedily undeceived.

"Hark!" cried young Jack, "which way was that?"

The girl's shrieks before alluded to were again heard, but they were soon stifled, and a stentorian voice that drowned every other sound, was heard to shout out in broken English:

"Beware of Monastos! Thus begins his vengeance!"

* * * * *

"Who is that?" asked the puzzled Ben. "What cries are those for help?"

"Little Emily has been carried off by the brigands!"

Ben Hawser staggered back aghast at the news.

"But how?"

"While we were watching you forward, they scrambled up aft—little Emily had just run on deck, and was seized in a moment, burked, and hauled overboard."

CHAPTER VI.

A MOTHER'S GRIEF—THE UNJUST TAUNTS—TO THE RESCUE OR TO DEATH.

POOR girl!

It was too true.

Little Emily had been carried off by the Greek brigands.

Kidnapped, with the utmost audacity, from the deck of the *Westward Ho!*

Swiftly, yet stealthily, a burly ruffian had clambered up the ship's side, and met Harvey's daughter as she was running on deck, to ascertain the meaning of the strange commotion.

Before she could utter a word or cry out, a pair of brutal hands had seized her, and whisked her off with as little effort or ceremony as if she had been a doll.

Ready hands awaited the prize below.

And then, profiting by their knowledge of the locality, the kidnappers hustled their victim out of sight, and were soon lost in the adjacent intricacies that bordered Fairy Creek.

At first the folks on board the *Westward Ho!* were thunderstruck, stupefied.

But speedily recovering themselves, they looked hurriedly to their arms, and rushed off in pursuit.

They had little to guide them.

The only indication that they had was the direction whence came those two despairing cries of the hapless girl.

No matter.

On they rushed, scrambled up the steep banks, and with difficulty penetrated the thickly-grown shrubs.

But they failed—failed entirely—in finding Little Emily.

And after a fruitless search, they wended their way back to the ship, utterly crestfallen.

As young Jack gained the deck, he found himself face to face with Mrs. Harvey.

The mother's face was ashy pale as she asked, tremblingly, news of her child.

"Where is my Emily? Oh, Jack!" she exclaimed, "have you found her?"

The boy hung his head.

"We shall find her yet, Mrs. Harvey," he said, falteringly.

"Find her!" echoed the grief-stricken mother. "Find her! You should never have returned without her."

Ben Hawser approached.

"Axiing your pardon, ma'am," stammered the honest fellow, tugging at his forelock, "we have searched every pint of the compass for Miss Emily, bless her heart!"

Mrs. Harvey wrung her hands, and moaned piteously.

"Had you done so," she exclaimed, with great bitterness, "my child would now be here."

Young Jack reddened to the roots of his hair at these words.

"Avast there, ma'am," exclaimed Ben Hawser, seriously; "we've done all that mortal man could do, and as for Master Jack, why, he behaved with the pluck of a second Nelson."

Young Jack, collecting himself, however, turned suddenly upon Hilda, and exclaimed:

"I'll rescue little Emily, or I'll leave my body in their hands."

And then, before anyone could divine his intentions, he darted from the deck into the state saloon.

Here he eagerly searched the books and papers for Spirillo's famous chart.

He was lucky enough to drop his hand upon it almost immediately.

Tearing it eagerly open, he scanned it through until he came to a ground plan marked:

"The prisoner's cavern."

"Now," said the boy, with fierce determination, "now we'll see, Mrs. Harvey, if you will taunt me with not finding Emily."

And then seizing a blank sheet of paper, he hurriedly made a sketch of the route and the plan, and a copy of the written indications.

This done, he turned to the cabin steps as Harry Girdwood came down and faced him.

"Where are you going, Jack?" demanded Harry, eagerly.

"I am going to set little Emily free," returned young Jack, resolutely, "or leave my body in the hands of the pirates."

"You know you are going to risk your life?" said his young comrade, earnestly.

"I do."

"That you are going almost to certain death, Jack?"

"I know it," returned young Harkaway, "but Mrs. Harvey shall not taunt me with cowardice, right or wrong. I go. Good-by, Harry."

He held out his hand.

The other took it, but he did not release it at once.

"Do you think, Jack," said he, "that I would let you go—"

"Let me go!" began young Harkaway, indignantly.

"Alone—never! We will face this danger together or not at all."

"Why should you run this risk for my sake?" said Jack, in a tone of remonstrance, but it was useless.

Harry Girdwood's manner showed that he would brook no denial.

"Enough, Jack. I go with you, or stay with you; we will face danger, it may be death, together."

He ran up on deck, closely followed by Harry. Here they met Ben Hawser.

"Avast, there, young gentlemen!" exclaimed the old salt, "whither away?"

"Ben," said young Jack, "we're going to find the pirates, and rescue Emily."

The old tar stared again at the speaker.

"Not wound up yet, Master Jack, at that 'ere tack?"

"No, nor do I intend to be until I have succeeded."

The old tar gave a long whistle.

"I'm afeard that'll take a precious long time," he said, dubiously.

"Maybe, Ben," said young Harkaway, "maybe, but I want you to bear the news to my mother as tenderly as you can."

"Here, I say, stow that," said Ben Hawser. "Why, I'd sooner face a broadside than have to go and tell that dear lady as how I had stood quietly by and let her boy parpetrate self-destruction; no, my hearty—axing your pardon—you shall tell her all about it yourself."

And then the wily old tar made one step to the grand cabin stairs.

"Mrs. Harkaway, ahoy!" he shouted.

He knew that he could not stop the boys himself, so he hoped to bring parental authority to bear upon Jack, but the latter was far too quick for old Ben.

With one bound the boy was at the ship's side.

"Come on, Harry, old boy!" he ejaculated; "follow me."

"I'm there."

And down the two boys dropped into the water.

Two minutes more and they had gained the shore.

At the self-same instant, Mrs. Harkaway reached the deck.

A hurried word of explanation sufficed to acquaint her with all that had occurred.

"That mad boy has rushed to his destruction," she exclaimed, in a frenzy of excitement.

"Where is Ben Hawser?"

"Here, marm."

"Send up a rocket."

Ben started.

"A what?"

"A rocket. You know the signal that was to bring my husband back in case of danger? What danger could be more terrible than that which threatens us now—that my rash boy, alone, seeks the pirate's den?"

CHAPTER VII.

YOUNG JACK AND HARRY GIRDWOOD SEEK ADVENTURES AND MEET WITH THEM; CHIEFLY AWKWARD.

As the two boys gained an open space, Harry

Girdwood's attention was attracted to the whizz of the rocket on board the *Westward Ho!*

"Hark!"

"I hear," said Jack.

They turned around, and then they saw the rocket shooting heavenwards like a fiery meteor.

"Do you know what that signal means?" said Harry.

"I know that it is a rocket," answered young Jack Harkaway, "what of that?"

"But you also remember that it was the signal agreed upon with your father to recall the party in case of danger."

Jack started.

The brave boy had not contemplated this.

"Oh, Harry—Harry," he exclaimed, "what have I done?"

"Upset the whole party," returned Harry Girdwood, dolefully.

Young Jack sighed.

"It is very difficult to define one's duty clearly."

"It is."

"And I could not bear Mrs. Harvey's reproaches. Moreover, think of poor little Emily."

"Poor girl."

"Yes, yes, Harry," he said resolutely, "after all, we have but one course open to us."

"To go to the rescue?"

"Yes, to the rescue of Emily."

And so the two boys went on.

Now, when they had got some distance, they began to hold a council of war.

Harry Girdwood was anxious to hear the plan of the campaign.

Young Jack's plan was of the simplest possible description.

It was this.

He proposed to follow out the paths indicated in the copy of Spirillo's chart, and lurk about the stronghold of the brigands.

Thither he felt sure the captive girl had been carried.

His idea was that she would be left comparatively free there.

If so, she would not be watched while she strolled up and down about the cavern and its vicinity, of which, thanks to Spirillo's many yarns on board the *Flowery Land*, he possessed acute foreknowledge.

He was indeed as well acquainted with the place already as was possible for one who had never seen it.

"And when you have seen her," said Harry Girdwood, "what then, old boy?"

"I shall trust in Providence," said young Jack.

Harry smiled.

"I hope I am as good a believer as you, Jack," said he, "but I believe in the old saying that Providence helps those who help themselves."

"So do I."

"Well, we must be careful and see what we can do, but I don't think we can do much good in the dark."

"Nor I."

"Then the best thing will be to camp for the night in some place snug and secure, and then when morning dawns—"

"It would be better to get nearer to the brigands' stronghold."

"If you like."

"Get a light then, and let us look over the chart."

This was done.

It was a precious piece of impudence, for the reflection of the light was the most likely thing of all to betray them to the enemy.

They soon discovered their error, for just as their lantern flashed, there was a shrill bird-call close by that startled them both.

"Do you hear that, Jack?"

"I do."

"And do you know what it means?" he asked, seriously.

"Yes; I suppose some bird."

"Jack," replied Harry Girdwood, in a whisper, "it was no bird. That is the signal of the enemy. Depend upon it, our light has alarmed something more dangerous than a bird."

"I hope not."

"I am sure."

"What shall we do, old fellow?" said Jack.

"Camp for the night."

"What, here?"

"It is dangerous, I think, Jack, thanks to our lantern, but I vote we roost up a tree."

"Good; but we must not let the pirates put a rope around our necks in the night."

The two boys did not take long to make up their minds.

They selected the nearest tree in which the foliage appeared to be thick.

The reason for this selection was obvious.

They wished their bodies to be completely shaded from view by the leaves and branches.

They soon hit upon a capital perch, where the thick, forked branches made them as secure a resting-place as though they had been upon *terra firma*.

It was indeed much more secure and required far less training than sleeping in a hammock.

Young Jack thought that he would never close his eyes, so thoroughly was he agitated by the events of the day, but presently fatigue prevailed over the agitation, and our youthful hero was slumbering peacefully, even before his less demonstrative comrade.

Sober Harry Girdwood poised himself upon his perch and leant around to look at Jack, whose extreme quietude rather alarmed him.

"Jack—Jack," he said, in a voice loud enough for young Harkaway to hear if he were awake, yet not sufficiently loud to arouse him if he slept.

No answer.

"Are you snug, old man?"

Snore.

"That means yes," said Harry, to himself.

"He's as snug as if he were tucked up in the family four-poster."

And the care of young Jack being off his mind, his trusty comrade squatted, nestled closer yet into the sheltering arms of the tree, and slept.

* * * * *

"Harry, old fellow."

"Jack."

"Goodness me! I was nearly over," said young Jack.

"So it appears. Why, Jack, you are half over the branch; hold on, or you will have an ugly fall, old man."

Harry Girdwood straightened himself upon the branch, and looked about him to take their bearings.

And then he discovered that their tree was upon the border of the thick wood.

They dropped from their perches, and gained the open.

The boys were deeply impressed.

The unvarying beauty of the climate would have been strange indeed to one fresh from our own foggy island, but our two youthful adventurers were veteran travelers.

Birds of gay plumage were in immense variety.

The vegetation was rich and varied—guavas, bananas, mangroves, bread-fruit and palms were common enough.

Occasionally a tree-fern—one of the most graceful of plants—was met with; the long feathered leaves, which in their general character resemble the common fern leaves of our own hedges, grow in a mass upon the top of a stem thirty or forty feet high, and descend nearly to the ground.

The hills in Fairy Island assumed strange, fantastic shapes, and were feathered with wood to their summits.

The boys were not insensible to the beauties of the place, but their thoughts were taken up by serious matters just now.

Soon after daybreak they examined the chart carefully together, and having made up their minds as to the precise part of the brigands' stronghold that they should make for, they started forth.

But it was a serious understanding between them that they were only to use their firearms in a case of dire extremity, in other words, when their very lives depended upon it.

Their route, according to Spirillo's plan, lay for a certain distance across the open country, and through rich prairies, but they were forced, from motives of prudence, to alter their course a bit.

Naturally, they could not make as much headway when forcing a passage through the thickly-grown bushes and shrubs that garnished the endless hills.

It was a long journey, but their dogged perseverance met with its reward, and when they least expected it, they found themselves suddenly close upon the pirates' lair.

They recognized the spot by a tall palm tree, and other landmarks, marked down in Spirillo's chart, and then the discovery was so sudden that it startled them not a little.

From beyond the palm tree in question, some thirty or forty yards, there was a low range of hills, stretched right across their path.

There was the range of hills, sure enough, but where was the river?

"Before we go any further," said young Jack, "I'll climb the palm tree, and take observations. There may be pirates about."

"Good," said his wary comrade, "but be careful not to speak to me while you are up there."

Up went young Jack, and when he had

reached a considerable altitude, he nodded excitedly to the expectant Harry.

"He sees the river," said Harry to himself.

Down came Jack.

They made now for the hills, choosing the part where there was the thickest growth of bush and shrub, and as they had reached the crest of the hill, they suddenly found themselves upon the brink of a precipice.

At its base rippled the stream marked in the chart.

As they stood there, they heard the sound of voices close at hand.

The words being in Greek, were not understood, but they guessed their meaning from the tone of command which was accompanied by the clinking of arms.

They were changing guard.

But where?

Then followed the regular marching sound as of drilled troops.

They thrust their heads further and further over the precipice, and peered down.

The first object that caught young Jack's attention was the muzzle of a long gun-barrel, pointed directly at him.

This was, to say the least, not a cheerful thing to contemplate: but it did not disturb young Harkaway at all, and for this simple reason—it was not presented at him; but it was carried over the shoulder of a sentry below.

This man walked up and down twice or thrice, and then he dropped his musket butt on to the ground and rested his arms on the muzzle, striking unconsciously a most picturesque attitude.

Stretching out still further, young Jack now perceived the explanation of all that had puzzled him before in connection with this episode.

Immediately beneath them was the cavern of the redoubtable Monastos.

The sentry was mounting guard at its entrance.

"Harry, I could pop off that fellow," whispered young Jack, eagerly; "it would make one less of their party."

"And two less of ours," returned his companion in the same tone. "Remember our compact; not to fire till we are compelled."

Barely were the words uttered, ere they were seized from behind and made prisoners.

CHAPTER VIII

YOUNG JACK IS DOOMED—AT THE CANNON'S MOUTH.

YOUNG JACK and Harry were cruelly handled, and bound with cords that were dragged at as though they were bales of woolen cloths for shipment to distant parts; and, added to this, their villanous captors heaped upon them the vilest threats and most abusive epithets.

Upon second thoughts, this latter part of their indignities did not count for much, as neither the English nor American boy could understand a word.

The two boys were hurried down the mountain slope by a path hitherto unperceived by them, and in a few moments they were brought before Monastos, the pirate and brigand of Magic Island.

As soon as Monastos saw the two boys, he nodded and smiled pleasantly at them, to their intense surprise.

Looking around, Jack saw that they were in a cavern, the center of which was supported by part of a broken ship's mast.

In other respects, too, the place was fitted up in a seafaring style.

"Dimitri," said he, in English, which he spoke admirably, "why have you bound up these two children so, with huge thongs that eat into their flesh, when for all purposes traces of packthread would have done as well?"

The man addressed as Dimitri uttered some apology.

The thongs were severed, and the two lads stood free.

"Now, young gentlemen," said Monastos, "just tell me what you are doing, trespassing on my property."

The pirate never ceased to smile in the same friendly manner upon his young prisoners.

"Had we known that the island was the property of anyone in particular, we should not have ventured here," replied young Harkaway.

"Unless your people are curious, inquisitive, spying people," said Monastos, pleasantly; "scoundrels and jail-birds," he smiled more agreeably than ever; "which is, indeed, very probable according to appearances."

Jack fired up at this.

"My father and his servants are all honorable people," he said, boldly.

The pirate's eyes twinkled at this.

"Your father?"

"Yes."

"So he is at the head?"

"Yes."

"What is his name?"

"Jack, that is, I mean John Harkaway."

"Humph! John Harkaway; I shall remember that name."

Harry Girdwood noticed his manner, and he felt uneasy.

The chief's smile had a nameless terror in it.

And he judged aright, for a cold, cruel man was Monastos, who took life as coolly and remorselessly as he would shoot a bird.

And it had as little effect upon him.

* * * * *

Jack was silent.

Had he said too much?

Harry feared it.

"Keep mum, now, old boy," he whispered, so low that the chief could not catch a word; but although he could not hear, he could see pretty well by the boy's manner what it all meant.

"Dimitri."

"Excellency."

"Take out that boy, he's too quiet and artful; leave me alone with the talkative one."

"Yes, sir."

Dimitri then tapped Harry Girdwood upon the shoulder and ushered him out.

Jack was about to follow too, when Monastos took him by the wrist, and detained him with gentle force.

"I want you."

Young Jack felt a little uncomfortable at this. He was not afraid, but the separation from Harry Girdwood was an unpleasant reminder that for the time being they were not their own masters.

Monastos, never even appearing to notice the longing, lingering looks which young Jack cast after his comrade, motioned him to sit down on a pile of cushions.

Young Jack hesitated, and was inclined to refuse, but prudence bade him obey.

So down he sat.

"Now, my young friend," said Monastos, with a bland smile, "answer me one or two questions."

"What are they?"

"How many, then, has your father got at the back of him?"

"A great many," answered Jack.

"I suppose they are all well armed?"

"Yes, well armed."

"How did they gain their knowledge of this place?"

"That I cannot, will not tell," said young Jack.

"Oh, you had better tell all that you know, without making any difficulties, for"—and here he smiled more pleasantly than ever—"you would find the consequences most disagreeable, unless you tell all you possibly can."

"Even then," said young Jack, stoutly, "I will not tell."

"Imprudent child," said the pirate chief.

"Why refuse information, when, as you may guess, I already know as much as you can tell me."

"Why then ask me?" said young Jack, quickly.

"To test your truth."

"That wants no testing," said young Jack; "I am like my father; if I speak at all, I speak truth."

"I believe you. But now tell me how much the traitor Spirillo has been able to inform you of—for it was he who brought you here, and he has paid for his treachery with his life, the renegade."

Young Jack was silent.

"On passing through the ravine, between those lofty, wooded heights, which direction does your party take?"

Young Jack found his tongue at this.

"Well," said he, with a light laugh, "you surely don't expect me to tell you that."

"Oh, yes, I do," said Monastos; "indeed I do."

"Then, sir," said Jack, quietly, "you will be disappointed."

"Oh, no," said Monastos, with that peculiar smile again; "I shall know all that you can tell upon the matter, for sure."

"You mistake."

"Not I."

"Indeed you do, for nothing in the world should induce me to divulge my father's movements in his endeavor to capture you and your wicked band."

"Nothing, my young friend?" said the pirate.

"Nothing!" replied Jack.

"We shall see."

Monastos turned and called one of his men, and upon the man making his appearance, he gave him some hurried instructions in his own native tongue.

This, it is needless to say, was "all Greek" to young Harkaway.

But the result of it soon appeared.

Through the wide opening a huge iron gun was wheeled into the cavern, and ran up, seemingly with comparative ease, just behind where young Jack stood.

"Seize the boy, and bind him tight to the cannon's mouth," cried Monastos, and in an instant the unfortunate boy was strapped to the muzzle of the gun.

"Now bring the fuse."

This was obeyed promptly, and Monastos took it in his hand and made one step up to the gun.

"Now, Master Harkaway," said his majesty, still smiling, "where is the information that I ask you for?"

The boy was silent.

"My patience will not hold out long," said Monastos; "give me the information or—" and here he flourished the fuse.

But young Jack was silent, and looked him boldly in the face.

We do not pretend to say that he felt unmoved at the alarming directions given by the pirate chief to his men.

"One last word," said Monastos; "I give you time to reflect and recant."

"I want no time," retorted young Jack. "You are a cold-blooded villain, and will meet your fate at the hands of my father."

"That remains to be seen. Your father, this cursed Englishman, shall yet be treated by me as you are. Now will you confess?"

"No. I am fully resolved as to what duty bids me do—do your worst at once; not a word shall you wring from me."

"Do you understand, boy, that as soon as I apply this fuse to the touch-hole, your body will be scattered in fragments?"

Young Jack closed his eyes, and a slight tremor of the lids showed that he was not insensible to the pirate's fatal menaces, but he was resolved to betry no emotion before them.

"Once more, boy," said Monastos, "I give you the chance of saving yourself; will you speak?"

"No."

"For the second time, will you answer my questions?"

"No."

"For the third time, I say, will you speak, and save your life?"

"From you, pirate? Never!"

"Then that is the last chance you have on this side of the grave. I am now placing the light to the touch-hole—die!"

"Monastos—Monastos! captain!" cried Dimitri, who here ran in and demanded eagerly of his chief if Paquita, his daughter, was there.

Monastos turned around with his fuse in his hand.

"My daughter here?" said the pirate chief. "What do you mean, fool? Begone, and don't interrupt me again on your life."

"I fear me," returned Dimitri, "that some accident has happened to her."

The brigand captain looked uneasy.

"What grounds have you for supposing that?" said he.

"Her voice was heard just now calling for assistance."

"There must be some mistake."

"No mistake; I fear she has been imprudent enough to venture forth, and has fallen into the hands of the enemy, to be held as hostage."

The pirate chief looked spitefully at Jack for a moment, then let fall the fuse from his hand.

His coolness deserted him; then suddenly arousing himself, he turned to Dimitri with a loud ejaculation.

"Have you sent many out in pursuit?"

"Not yet," said Dimitri.

"Then," said Monastos, "let it be done; scatter your men right and left—north and south immediately, for if they are about this part, we shall snare them yet."

"It shall be done," said Dimitri, "but till something more is learnt, I would give a word of advice."

"What is it?"

"Suspend punishment," he added, with a significant glance at Jack strapped to the cannon's muzzle; "for, my life on it, they would take bitter revenge."

"Boy," said the pirate chief, "your life for one short hour is spared; but think not to escape your doom."

Then the pirate hurried forth to give further directions to recover his lost child.

CHAPTER IX.

ON THE WAR-PATH—MAGOG BRAND'S PRISONER—
THE ALARM—NERO PLAYS POSTMAN.

It is time to return to the main body.

Before sundown, they were destined to learn that Monastos' army was far more important than they had been led to suppose; for the pirate had of late greatly increased his band.

But although his arrangements were pretty perfect, he was yet ill at ease.

He dreaded lest the very winds should waft out to sea the secrets of his treasure isle.

You can imagine, therefore, with what mingled sensations of rage he saw the ship *Westward Ho!* harbored in Fairy Creek, with daring Jack Harkaway, and his fellow adventurers.

Diverging a bit from the exact line of route which Harkaway had laid down, the party found themselves under the necessity of fording a stream.

The opposite banks of the stream were bordered by a thick growth of shrub and bush.

"Stop—stop!" said Magog Brand; "before any more is done, let a scout be sent out."

"Who will act as scout?"

"I'll scout," said Magog, who feared to be accused of making a proposal, and shirking the consequences of it.

And, then, before a word could be uttered in opposition, he started off.

He forded across, until it got too deep for him, and then he swam the rest of the way.

Clambering carefully up the steep heights, he reached the brow of the hill, where, suddenly, he dropped upon a man stretched on the ground.

The strength of Magog Brand's fingers was something prodigious.

They closed around the throat of the unfortunate brigand, and, with what seemed to be a gentle squeeze, it drove every gasp of breath out of the poor wretch's body.

"Say half a word," he hissed in his ear, "and I'll pin you to the ground, like a butterfly in a collector's case."

With this promise, it is needless to say that little Mr. Brand's prisoner preserved a dignified silence.

He looked about him while he held his prisoner on the ground, and seeing that all was safe, he signalled the rest of his party to follow on.

"Come, old man," said Jack Harkaway to Brand; "that's not so bad. We must turn this prisoner to account."

They made the unfortunate Greek struggle to his feet, and trudge on.

He showed some considerable alacrity in obeying this last order.

If he contemplated making a bolt of it, he was doomed to a cruel disappointment.

At his elbow walked Jack Harkaway the elder, armed with his death-dealing weapon.

The least show of treachery upon the unhappy man's part, would have been immediately followed by the ramming of a pistol muzzle into his ear.

In the event of that contingency arising, the brigand's life with Harkaway and Company would be a short, but not a merry one.

"Speak English?" bawled Mr. Jefferson in his ear.

The prisoner, half deafened, shook his head.

"French?"

"No."

"Italian?"

The prisoner's eyes glistened intelligently.

"Italiano, si."

"That's your sort," said Jefferson; "now you can fire away at him, Harkaway."

"I want you," said Jack Harkaway, in Italian, "to take me by a safe route to the stronghold of Manastos, the pirate chief."

The prisoner made no reply, but stared stolidly before him.

"Do you hear?" said Harkaway. "*Havete intosso male?*"

"Yes, replied the brigand, doggedly; "but if I refuse?"

"That as you please," returned Harkaway in the same tongue; "if you do, we have but one resource."

"What is that?"

"To hang you."

And then turning to his party, Harkaway added:

"Get a rope ready, tie a noose at the end, and throw it over a tree that will make the handiest gallows."

The significant look accompanying these words told them what was wanted.

So Jack Harkaway's order was carried out, with a certain flourish, with a view to making an impression upon the prisoner.

But the Greek stared straight before him in silence; apparently unmoved by it all.

"Takes no notice," said Jack Harkaway; "can't frighten him, I suppose."

"Wait a bit," said Jefferson; "we'll try."

Magog Brand's thoughts ran in the same direction, for seizing the rope, he cast the noose over the prisoner's head.

Now our Greek was by no means a coward, but as the rope came in contact with his flesh, a change came over his face.

"For the last time," said Jack Harkaway, "decide your own fate."

No reply.

The brigand's lips quivered, and he closed his eyes.

"For the last time of asking," said Harkaway, "answer our questions or hang."

He waited a second—perhaps two or three—and then waved his hand by way of signal.

"Let him hang till he is dead."

"Pull ahoy—ahoy," cried Magog Brand, gleefully.

And he did pull, too, with a vengeance.

In a moment the unfortunate wretch was swinging in the air.

As his body was jerked up in the air, the victim threw his arms wildly about him.

"I will answer," he cried, in a stifled voice.

Down he came with a flop upon the ground all in a heap like a bundle of rags.

If his face had been pale before, it was black enough now.

They knelt down over him, and removing the rope drew open his shirt.

"Halloo!" said Jefferson; "we have gone a little too far."

"Give him some water."

"Nonsense," said Magog Brand, "give him some whiskey."

This advice was followed by one of the men.

The flask was thrust into his mouth, and a few drops of the fiery spirit poured down his throat.

Thereupon he blinked and winked and opened his eyes.

He coughed and spluttered and used some bad language, and scowled upon his captors.

"Well," said Harkaway, "have you made up your mind to listen to reason?"

"I am in your power," growled the Greek, "and I cannot help myself."

"Glad, old man, you see things in their proper light," said Harkaway, cheerfully.

"But I consent on one condition only."

"Make no conditions with him," said Jefferson.

"But we may as well hear what the villain has to say," cried Brand.

"Speak."

"Supposing," said the brigand, "that your expedition should be successful, I want you to engage that my life shall be spared—that I shall not be handed over to the authorities. Else I should only be spared to serve your purpose now."

"What does he say?"

Jack briefly translated the brigand's speech.

"That's reasonable enough," said Jefferson; "consent, then."

Jack Harkaway gave the required assurance, and the party prepared to start.

"Be true to us," said Harkaway, "and you'll not find us bad friends; we are better friends, in fact, than we are enemies, and it may be more to your profit to serve us than it has been to serve Monastos."

"You cannot expect too much good, Jack, from one who shows himself a traitor to start with."

"I know that," said Jack; "but be as true to us as you have shown yourself to Monastos, and we will ask no more. Monastos, I believe, is not too safe a man to work for."

"I serve him, but do not like him," said the brigand.

Harkaway then explained that it was a much safer game to serve the *Westward Ho!* than to follow the treacherous Monastos.

They saw the influence of Harkaway's reasoning in the prisoner's altered manner, but they did not relax their vigilance.

It was pitchy dark, when suddenly a glare in the sky caught their attention.

"See there!" ejaculated Magog Brand, "what's that?"

"Look how it trails down," said Jefferson; "it is a rocket."

Just then a familiar voice was heard close at hand, signalling the party.

It was Harvey.

He had been reconnoitering at some little distance from the party for hours past, and now had rejoined the main body upon seeing the rocket.

"Do you see that?" said he, in tones of alarm; "the danger signal from our ship, the *Westward Ho!*"

The words thrilled every hearer.

CHAPTER X.

HOW HARKAWAY AND MOLE SET FORTH IN COMPANY, AND WHAT CAME OF IT—YOUNG JACK AGAIN—THE SURPRISE—SIX TO ONE—A DESPERATE FIGHT.

JACK HARKAWAY held a hurried council of war, in which it was agreed that some should camp there for the night, while two of the party returned to the ship for information.

Some few slept, but they mostly passed the night in restless anxiety.

Towards daybreak the sentinel was heard to cock his rifle.

Slight as was the noise, it was heard by all.

They saw the vigilant guard bring his rifle up to his shoulder.

They also saw that he was aiming at some tall, shaggy object.

And in a moment more, when he was about to pull the trigger, Magog Brand bounded forward and restrained him.

"Don't you see who it is?" said he to the sentry.

Just then the shaggy object came out into the open, and who should it be but Nero?

"I knew it could be no enemy," said Magog, "because our friend Mike was so quiet."

Nero advanced with his familiar waddle, and carrying his tail under his right arm with a certain grace.

He shook hands with the party generally.

"Oh! Nero," said Harkaway, "why can't you talk?"

"He is too artful," said Jefferson, with a grin.

He had a string around his neck now at which he tugged persistently until they were forced to see it.

"He has got a string necklace," said Magog.

They pulled at the necklace and found that at the back of it was attached a piece of paper upon which these words had been hastily scribbled:

"Jack and I have fallen into the power of Monastos, and are now in great danger. If you have any prisoners, offer exchange.—HARRY GIRDWOOD."

There was a postscript which had been written even yet more hurriedly.

It ran as follows:

"Miss Emily is here, I believe, but we have not yet been able to see her. Monastos is blood-thirsty, cruel, and revengeful. Be careful and take no lives. You may want prisoners to exchange."

"Well," said Jefferson, pulling a long breath, "what do you say to that?"

Harvey shook his head.

"I don't like it."

"It certainly looks very ugly," said Magog, who had an extraordinary degree of confidence in anything young Jack did, "but that boy will get out of it all right, I'll wager my life. Why, he has got the devil's luck and his own too."

Harkaway did not look very hopeful.

"A belief in luck is all very well in its way," said he, "but I have my presentiments too."

"You must not despond," said Jefferson.

"I don't."

"Despond," echoed little Magog; "desponding is all pickles. They talk of a cat's nine lives; young Jack Harkaway has fifty lives. Why, I verily believe that if he were hanged, he would come to life—"

"Like Ambrose Gwinnette, who was hanged on the sands?"

"Yes."

"Perhaps."

"I'm sure of it. Moreover, I believe that the bullet is not cast, nor the hemp grown for the rope that can take the life of young Jack Harkaway."

"I share that belief," said Jefferson.

"So do I."

"And I."

"And so do I," said Isaac Mole, with the air of a man who puts the finishing stroke to an argument; "and what is more, in the course of the next four-and-twenty hours I'll bring back my dear young Jack to you safe and sound."

"You?"

"Yes, I."

Mr. Mole struck an attitude in which modesty and boldness—diffidence and defiance were judiciously mingled.

"Am I to understand, Mr. Mole," said Harvey, "that you mean to do this single-handed?"

Isaac Mole swelled out like a bantam cock as he replied:

"Such is my intention."

Jack Harkaway had grown very impatient. He could wait no longer the return of the party from the ship.

Harkaway felt anxious to know the exact truth, for when he reflected that his brave boy was a prisoner in the hands of the enemy, it made him feel that Jack's danger was indeed great.

As may be supposed, Dick Harvey also felt not a little anxious.

But he prudently resolved to wait the return of the party from the ship for confirmation of the bad tidings.

Jack Harkaway vowed that he would start off alone.

This was opposed by most of the party.

But the strongest opposition was made by no less a person than Isaac Mole.

If Harkaway went, the warrior Mole swore that he would go with him.

"Well, old friend," cried Jack, "you shall go with me; it will remind me of old times, for we have often been on desperate service together."

"Jack, my dear boy," said Mole, "it is very kind of you to speak so, and you shall find Mole, your old friend, has still his courage to fight for his old pupil, Jack Harkaway."

"Brava, Mole," cried Harvey, "give us the old friendly grip of your hand, then off you go with Jack."

When they had covered about a mile of ground, Harkaway stopped suddenly, saying:

"I have made a discovery."

"Where, Jack?" cried Mole, taking out his revolver.

"Look there," said Jack, quickly. "A party of six armed men are marching along with a prisoner, whose arms are securely fastened behind him."

Now bold Jack's heart beat high when he saw them, for in spite of the distance that separated them, he recognized the prisoner at the first glance.

It was his son, young Jack.

"I see my son, Mr. Mole," said he, gleefully. "I see him. Look."

Mole saw young Jack looking as bold as ever.

"How shall we do, Harkaway?" said he; "steal around and fall upon them?"

Harkaway stared at the speaker.

But the latter meant it.

The thought of his young pupil's peril filled him with desire to be at the enemy.

"No, that will not do; leave me here; you can do me good service by seeking our friends."

"And leave you, Jack!" cried Mole.

"Yes, make all haste back," said Harkaway, "and get Jefferson, with some one else, to come back at the double."

"But they are marching," said Mr. Mole, "marching fast, and before we can come up, they will all have cleared off."

"Leave that to me," said Harkaway; "I will undertake to keep them employed until you can come with assistance."

"Off I go then," said Mole, "anything to serve you, Jack, and our dear boy."

Off he went.

He stumped over the ground at a great rate, and was very soon out of sight.

* * * * *

Harkaway made for the party with all caution.

His object was to surprise the party.

Jack felt all his old courage mount to his heart, for fear was unknown to him.

He was a desperate man—for was not his only son in peril?

"Patience—patience, Jack," he said to himself, "or you will do your brave boy more harm than good by rashness."

At length, the party of Greeks with their prisoner were within pistol shot, and it became necessary to adopt some definite plan of action.

He eyed the advancing party keenly, from a snug spot where he himself was invisible to them.

Seven men!

"Seven Greek brigands to one Englishman," said Harkaway; "humph! long odds, but I must rescue my boy at any risk."

He did not fear for his own life, but what he did fear was to fail in his purpose.

If he should be beaten off, or perhaps killed, what would become of his dear boy?

He shuddered at the bare idea.

Death would not be the worst of it in all probability, for Spirillo had told him such tales of the atrocities perpetrated by these villainous compounds of pirates and brigands, that it made his blood run cold.

The savage Indians were gentle by comparison.

Jack Harkaway had not long to consider about his plan of motion.

They were close upon him.

Creeping up behind a thick tree, he prepared.

He loosened his cutlass in its fastening, then looked to the priming of his pistols.

They were all ready for action, and so was our old friend Jack.

Carefully, yet hurriedly, he loosened them, so that no bungling at the critical moment might spoil his chance.

The brigands marched on, and now their steady, regular tramp sounded close at hand.

Harkaway gripped his cutlass nervously in his sinewy palm, and waited.

Seven stalwart fellows they were, too.

Men standing nearly six feet high, for the most part, all broad-shouldered and powerful fellows, as far as he could judge.

"I shall want all my old luck and pluck to back me up, or good-bye to me, and to my boy as well."

And now they were within a dozen paces.

"I will do no coward's trick, but face them boldly," cried Jack.

"Now for it!"

They were just passing the spot where he stood when he stepped forth, and with pistol in hand, faced them.

"Stand, you ruffians!"

They did not understand the meaning of Jack's words, but there was no misunderstanding the gesture which accompanied them.

With a simultaneous cry of surprise, they started back.

Harkaway, who had all his presence of mind about him, dashed forward, a sword in one hand, a pistol in the other.

Now, when they fell back aghast at the courage of one man, he made a rush, not at them, but, to their intense surprise, at the prisoner.

"Jack, my boy!"

"Father!"

His cutlass was as sharp as a razor, and two strokes at the cords which bound his arms set young Jack at liberty.

"Take this pistol, Jack, sharp!"

"All right, father!"

And in less time than it has taken to describe it, the odds were lessened by half.

They were two against seven instead of only one.

"Are you ready to fight for your life, Jack?" cried Harkaway.

"Ay—ay, sir," responded young Jack, quite gleefully.

The British tars are said to cheer as soon as they come in sight of the enemy, and so it was with our heroes, the Harkaways.

They never thought much about odds.

These two bold spirits cheered now.

They looked upon the battle as their own already.

The Greeks, recovered from their first surprise, rallied, and turned to the Harkaways, but the pistols kept them at a respectful distance.

"Dare to raise your carbines and you are dead men!" said Jack, keeping his pistol well directed at their heads.

Suddenly, however, one of the Greeks swung around his carbine, and clapping the butt to his hip, cocked it.

It was pointed full at Harkaway senior.

Another moment, and a bullet would have, probably, put an end to the encounter, but before he could pull the trigger, a well-aimed shot from young Jack's pistol smashed his right arm, and the carbine fell from his grasp.

This was the signal for the fight to begin in earnest.

"Oh, if we had but our old friend Dick here," cried Harkaway, "he would soon make short work of the villains!"

Harkaway waved the cutlass around his head, and charged the whole party.

With one desperate blow, an enemy lay writhing at his feet.

A second stroke brought another to his knees, and he would have been further disabled had not the rest of the party, recovering from their first surprise, fallen upon Harkaway sword in hand.

Now Jack Harkaway was a splendid swordsman, but four to one are long odds, and soon he found himself very hard pressed.

Twice had he been wounded.

He was bleeding from two flesh wounds that were not by any means serious, but were yet unpleasant reminders that one man at the best is no match for four.

Yet Harkaway was not discouraged; he felt sure of victory.

"Keep one of them engaged, Jack, my boy; this one will do," he cried, passing his sword quickly through one of the brigand's arms; "he

can't do much now. I will soon settle the hash of the other three."

At that moment he heard the sound of hurried footsteps; he looked up, expecting to see his friends, but his disappointment was great, for instead of friends he saw two more Greek brigands, with swords in hand, dash forward.

Twice, then, was he beaten back, and one desperate downstroke had brought him to his knees, when he had a happy inspiration.

He bethought him of his old ventriloquial powers, and he managed to throw his voice to some little distance from the scene of the strife.

It sounded like a confused murmur of voices, and it succeeded in deceiving the brigands.

The Greeks fancied that their enemy was about to be rescued by his own party. They started back a pace or two, expecting to see some of Jack's friends ready to rescue Harkaway and young Jack.

And in that moment of surprise, Jack Harkaway's chance was made.

"Be ready, boy," cried Harkaway to young Jack, "to do as I tell you."

"All right, dad," said young Jack; "we will make them remember we are English."

Harkaway then made another scramble forward, and attacking them vigorously, drove them further and further back.

At the same time Harkaway threw the sound of his voice in the wood, and it sounded like the hoarse words of menace that had before alarmed the Greeks.

What could they do?

A man and a boy faced them.

A whole crowd seemed to menace them in their rear.

Naturally they turned to see if the enemy was approaching from the wood.

It was but momentary, yet it was enough for Jack and his son to dart into the wood.

The Greeks now half guessed at the truth, for no sooner had the prisoners fled, than they rushed after them, unmindful for the time of that invisible, yet audible, enemy who had so startled them by their confused murmurs in the woods.

Now Harkaway anticipated this.

"Stop, Jack!" he cried to his son; "show fight again, like a true boy of England!"

The boy was nothing loth.

Turning sharply around, they faced the enemy in their mad rush.

"Aim low, lad," said Harkaway. "Besteady."

"All right," said young Jack, "this little fellow will stop one."

And he cocked his pistol.

Barely were the words spoken, when a couple of shots did execution on the advancing enemy, and then the echo of the report had scarcely died away, when Harkaway cried:

"Ready again, lad!"

Bang! bang!

The brigands stopped and knew not what to do.

Quick to take advantage of their momentary confusion, the Harkaways plunged yet deeper into the woods, and soon they were hopelessly lost to the Greek brigands.

"Well done, Jack, my boy; we have given the brigands a lesson that English pluck is more than a match for Greek brigands or pirates."

CHAPTER XI.

HUNTED BY BLOODHOUNDS.

LET us leave Harkaway and his son for awhile, and take a brief glance at one whose fortunes we trust have your sympathies still.

Cæsar Hannibal Constantine Augustus Jex, or, as young Jack christened him—Sunday—was, as you may remember, in some considerable trouble.

Petrus, the half-daft brigand, had started with his twin bloodhounds, Castor and Cyrus, to hunt poor Sunday down, and consequently he was in deadly peril.

Sunday was in great trouble through losing his way.

Vainly did he endeavor to get again into the beaten track—hopelessly did he wander in search of some familiar landmark.

Each tree and shrub seemed alike the twin brother of its neighbor.

"S'pose I's gwine to die ob hunger like de blessed babbies in de wood?" said poor Sunday to himself, ruefully.

He sat down and thought.

He arose and acted.

He climbed up the tallest trees to reconnoiter.

He slid down to mother earth in despair.

He scratched his wool for an idea, and looked as glum as possible.

At one time he was half-inclined to give it up for a bad job.

"If I was to lay down," he said, to himself, "and gib up the ghost, I wonder if any of dem cock sparrows would come and cober ober my blessed corpus with leaves and sich."

Then, after a moment's pause, he started off with a desperate resolution to recover the lost track.

And, lo! soon came his reward.

Before he had been walking a quarter of an hour, he came upon a wide path, with roads abutting right and left, that evidently led to somewhere.

"Now," said he, to himself, with a grin, "now I's thar, haw—haw!"

This was hallooing before he was out of the woods, with a vengeance.

But he had barely begun his grin, when he stopped short, and his expression changed suddenly.

Wherefore?

Why did his eyes open wider and wider, as though they would start from their sockets?

Why did he tremble and look fearfully around him then, as if for protection?

A moment more, and the cause of his alarm was clear enough.

Hark! what is that noise?

The sound of the distant baying of dogs was heard.

Poor Jex had lived in the southern states of America in his youth, and he had fallen into cruel hands there.

Goaded on to desperation, he had fled from his inhuman master, and he had been hunted down by bloodhounds.

His sable skin even then bore traces of that fearful conflict, in which he had by a mere chance escaped being torn piecemeal by the savage hounds.

Involuntarily he shuddered at the sound.

He looked to his weapons with some eagerness.

His pistols were ready for use.

His knife was loose in its sheath.

If the odds were not too great against him, he would prove an ugly customer to tackle.

This might be seen no less in his broad chest and muscular arms, than in the look of quiet resolution of his countenance.

He listened for a few moments intently.

Then his expression brightened again.

He felt relieved.

"Only two," he muttered. "Only two dogs; they shall have a bullet each, and as for those who are with the dogs, let them beware; no mercy, no quarter if I get within arm's length of them with this my good knife."

He meant it.

But it was not his intention to risk an encounter if he could avoid it.

No.

Fight he would if he were put to it, but he meant to try and escape first.

He fled along the winding road as fast as his legs would carry him.

Still he could hear the fierce dogs gaining upon him at every step.

They scented their prey from afar.

Now when Sunday had covered half a mile, or rather more, the road he was taking ceased its serpentine career, and ran straight for nearly a mile, and being nearly level, you could see almost to the end of it.

Nearer and nearer sounded the baying of the bloodhounds.

Sunday turned as he ran to view his pursuers. He did not stop for a moment for them, but rushed on at a greater pace than ever.

They sighted their prey now, and with a fierce bark of delight they flew on.

The race would have soon been over—the day would soon have been decided, but for one circumstance.

Castor and Cyrus were tied together, and consequently could not make the same progress that they would have made had they been more free in their movements.

Herein lay the flying negro's chance.

It was a poor one.

A few more strides, they were close at his heels.

At this exciting juncture a voice was heard in the distance, and a man appeared flying in pursuit of the twin bloodhounds.

"Ho, Castor!" he shouted; "Cyrus, hey! ho! come here!"

The master of the dogs—for it was the mysterious brigand, Petrus—called and shouted to his brutes until he was black in the face.

In vain.

They scented a victim.

They smelt blood.

Moreover, their master was barely within hearing.

"Brutes!" cried the exasperated brigand, "fiends! you shall not smell food for this for days to come. Hold, hold!"

But it was in vain.

The hounds yelped and bounded forward.

Another moment and poor Sunday felt them at his back.

The fight could not long be delayed.

He turned and faced them, pistols in hand.

The hounds pulled up suddenly as the negro showed his face, and crouching, snarled and displayed their fangs.

"Not gwine to chaw up dis chile yet," said Sunday.

Now, while they crouched and watched, Petrus came on behind at a smart double.

Sunday could face the twin bloodhounds.

But this increased the odds considerably.

Was he a match for the hounds and their master?

"Come off," said Petrus, approaching; "lie down, you brutes, or I'll be the death of you."

Sunday stared again.

This Greek's English was a good deal purer than his own.

It had well-nigh proved fatal to the poor negro's chance, for his attention was momentarily distracted, and no sooner did the watchful hounds perceive the enemy's glance wander than they sprang.

But they were not quick enough for the bold negro.

He let fly his left hand pistol.

And then without waiting to see the result of his shot, he turned and ran again.

The shot had brought the bloodhounds to a stand, and before Sunday had run very far, their master was kneeling before them.

"That's the reward for disobedience."

He looked after the flying negro as he spoke, and then he saw that Sunday was a very long way ahead.

"Halloo," he cried, "he'll drop into the river, if he doesn't watch it."

The words were barely uttered, when Sunday found himself floundering out of his depth in the water.

Had come so suddenly upon the river that he had not noticed it.

"If the poor fellow can't swim," said Petrus, "I shall have wrought his destruction all the same, although unintentionally."

Quick as thought he uncoupled the dogs, and ran at full speed to the river, followed by his fierce servitors.

But just as he got to the bank, he saw the negro breasting the water, and swimming like a fish.

He called and bawled after Sunday:

"I am a friend, I tell you, I wish you no harm; stop."

Sunday turned over on his back, shouting back:

"Not good enough for dis chile."

A few more strokes brought him to the opposite bank, up which he scrambled, panting and dripping.

"Licked yer, yah!" cried Sunday; "now take care of yourself, or dis chile give you something cold in shape of bullet."

"I tell you I'm a friend," cried Petrus, across the water.

"Yah—yah!" laughed Sunday; "golly, nice old friend, you dam tief—"

"I wish to speak with you," cried Petrus again; "to give you friendly advice."

"And to gib dem dam tykes a meal of dis chile, but dis chile gib dem toke instead—ah, yah. And I'll gib dere blessed master toke likewise, by golly."

He took out his pistol that was yet loaded, and aimed point blank at Petrus.

But the latter never flinched.

He feared not.

"I tell you I am your friend," again cried Petrus.

"You dam tief, you know dat," cried Sunday, and he made off as fast as his legs would carry him.

Petrus watched his retreating figure with disappointment.

Then he followed the course of the river some thirty or forty yards, until he came to a familiar spot, where he forded across, closely followed by his bloodhounds.

Once on the opposite bank he shook the water from his garments and followed Sunday.

Sunday soon got a glance of them in pursuit, and he redoubled his efforts, and very soon he managed to increase the distance which separated them.

As he ran, he presently came in sight of a

large stone building that filled him with wonderment.

The stones were roughly hewn and of many forms and colors, and they were built up with an eye to solidity more than elegance.

In front of the first floor window was a wooden balcony of such massive construction that the front wall must have been solid indeed to have been able to carry the weight of the huge beam upon which the veranda was built.

The sight of the house startled Sunday.

He looked in.

It was untenanted.

Bounding in, he swung to the massive door, and placed in position the thick bar of timber which fitted into grooves upon each side and kept it fast.

It was a tough job for one man to lift this huge plank.

The door itself was made of solid wood about six inches thick, and it would have taken ordnance to move it.

Having assured himself that this was secure, he ran to the back.

But there was no outlet there.

Then he mounted the stairs.

He was in some doubt before beginning his investigations here, for he made his way cautiously, knife in hand.

He had it all to himself.

The first floor consisted of four rooms, all lofty and spacious; and all furnished with windows from which the country about could be seen.

Making with all speed for the front room, he threw open the shutters and looked out.

There was Petrus.

Yes, and there were the twin bloodhounds, Castor and Cyrus.

"Yah—yah!" cried Sunday. "Me dry my powder and have shot at you soon."

Petrus looked up.

"The rash fool," cried Petrus, aloud, "he's treed at last."

"Golly!" retorted Sunday; "you calls that treed, Massa Greek—I calls it saved."

CHAPTER XII.

HOW THE PIRATE'S DAUGHTER AIDED THE PRISONERS.

WE must not forget little Emily, or the daring manner in which her abduction had been effected by Monastos, the pirate chief himself.

If courage and daring should give a man pre-eminence among his fellows, then did Monastos earn the title of king of the island.

Poor little Emily would have again shrieked for help, had not her cries been stifled and burked by the unceremonious treatment she experienced at the hands of her captors.

Twice—thrice did she cry out before they had completely stifled her voice.

Gagged and rendered absolutely helpless, she was forced to resign herself to her fate.

She knew that all the lamentation in the world could not help her now.

The myrmidons of Monastos hurried her along until they came to the cave by the river, where young Jack had been also a prisoner.

Here she had been seen by the daughter of Monastos, whose tender heart was touched by the girl's distress, and who interceded at once in her behalf.

There was nothing to be gained by opposing his daughter's wishes, and so Monastos gave over little Emily into her care.

The two girls could only converse by signs.

However, in spite of all difficulties, they soon contrived to establish between them a perfect understanding.

Little Emily explained her sad predicament, and the brigand's daughter fully consoled with her.

But while they were in the midst of their mutual confidence, a noise without attracted Paquita's attention.

She ran to ascertain the cause of it.

It is needless to say that it was the advent of Harry Girdwood.

Little did Emily dream who it was.

But great was her joy when the boy, escorted by two of the brigands, entered.

"Harry!"

"Emily!"

He was amazed, for he had never expected to meet her now, although the search for her had been the origin of their misadventure.

"You are not hurt, Emily?" he said.

"No."

"That is well. Why, they will be overjoyed to hear it, and Jack—"

"Yes," interrupted Emily, with great eagerness; "he is not here, too!"

"Yes, he is," answered Harry, "worse luck!"
 "How came you to be taken?"
 "Seeking you."
 "Are all safe but us?"
 "Yes."
 "Why is Jack not here?"

"The chief of these villains has kept him back for some purpose that I can't guess at."
 Emily's countenance fell at these words.
 Harry Girdwood stared at Paquita, and then at Emily.

"This is his daughter," said Emily.
 "The pirate chief's?"
 "Yes."
 "She looks very kind and gentle," said Harry.
 "And isn't she pretty?" exclaimed Emily, enthusiastically.

"Well, I think she is," said Harry, with the air of one who would not be led away rashly by female charms.

"Think! Why, you know she is lovely," said Emily.

And then to clinch the matter and settle it beyond further dispute, she seized the brigand's daughter and embraced her fervently.

Paquita returned her caresses with as much affection and warmth.

Already they were like old friends.

Paquita asked Emily in Greek who Harry was. But as Emily could not understand her, she showed in pantomime what she meant to convey by pressing her heart, sighing deeply, and then kissing the tips of her fingers.

"No—no—no!" said Emily.

Harry understood this likewise.

"No—no," said he; "he is with your father."

Harry's words were to her as Greek was to him.

But she understood his gesture.

She gave them a nod and a smile of intelligence, and ran to the entrance of the adjoining cavern, where she learnt all that was going forward.

She heard the command given, and knowing the cruel, vindictive nature of her father, she trembled for the young prisoner.

She beckoned to Harry Girdwood.

He approached.

"Listen," she said, pointing to the other cavern.

He caught her meaning, and at the self-same instant he heard young Jack's voice indignantly refusing to betray his people.

He heard the bold boy scoffing at the King of Magic Island, hurling defiance in his very teeth.

Paquita saw the consternation in his face, and she was full of eagerness to aid young Jack, no less upon his friend's account than his own.

For about a minute she stood aloof buried in thought.

Then she looked up with a start and clapped her hands joyously.

She had hit upon a scheme.

"Come this way with me," she said, pointing to an aperture in the further end of the cavern. "Quick!"

They followed her into the dark recess, where, to their intense surprise, they discovered a ladder leading to a large vaulted chamber above.

"Quick!" she exclaimed, excitedly. "Andiamo!"

"Halloo!" exclaimed Harry Girdwood, "that's not Greek. I shall be able to talk to her if she speaks Italian!"

He had learned it from his friends, the Harkaways.

So diligently had he pursued his studies of that beautiful language, indeed, during the voyage of the *Westward Ho!* that he was tolerably proficient now.

"Where are we going?" he demanded in Italian.

"To save your friend," replied Paquita, eagerly. "You must be quick, or it will be too late. Up the ladder! Quick—quick!" she continued.

He ran up.

Emily followed.

Then went Paquita.

As soon as she was at the top, she pulled the ladder up after her, or more properly speaking, she essayed to do it, for it was so weighty that it required their united efforts to accomplish it.

When, however, it was safely there, Paquita suddenly startled the companions of her flight by giving a succession of the most piercing shrieks.

"Help—help!" she cried. "Save me—oh, save me!"

The brigands rushed into the cavern and looked about in all directions.

But not a trace could they discover of their chieftain's daughter.

One of the men, it is true, examined the recess beneath the aperture, where the fugitives stood watching, but seeing no ladder there, it never

occurred to him that they had winged their flight in that direction.

One of the pirates then ran in to inform Monastos of the supposed fatal tidings, the capture of his daughter by the enemy, and for the time young Jack's life was spared.

* * * * *

Parties of armed men were sent out in every direction to seek for the daughter of King Monastos.

The most trusty scouts were sent to scour the woods and forests.

But in vain.

Not a trace of the lost Paquita could they find.

One of the men brought back the tidings that a whole army was advancing upon them.

"What army?" demanded the chief.

"Those cursed English have managed to get together a powerful force."

"Then call my men together. These bold intruders shall find a terrible foe when they meet me."

The brigand's fears had exaggerated the danger, and tripled, at least in his fancy, the effective force of Harkaway's troops.

"You say they are marching in this direction?" said Monastos.

"Yes."

"And that their force presents how many men?"

The brigand, his informant, was taken at a nonplus here.

He was not very good at counting heads, and he had not expected to be called upon to knock off the precise quantity to such a fine point.

"I cannot estimate their number as to a dozen," said he, "but this I know, they are numerous enough to crush us by sheer force of numbers."

Monastos wore a troubled expression of countenance.

"Then," said the chief of the brigands, promptly, "we must make up in tact what we may lack in strength."

"This boy," resumed Monastos, indicating young Jack, "you will have taken under guard to the castle."

"Yes, captain."

"Away with you," said the chief, "and mind that you select those paths that the enemy has not yet advanced upon."

"It shall be done, captain."

"Once at the castle see to make everything secure, for we shall join you there as soon as we have got Paquita safely back."

"Good."

"Away!"

* * * * *

The orders of the autocratic chief were obeyed to the letter.

The armed escort of the young prisoner took a most secluded route—that is, the way that was the most remote from Fairy Creek.

But chance was against them, for during their march Jack Harkaway and Mr. Mole dropped across the party.

It is not necessary either to allude more closely to the fight in the woods between our old friend Jack and the brigands, or the boldness and dash which brought about the rescue of our youthful hero by his daring and adventurous father.

* * * * *

And now for Sunday.

CHAPTER XIII.

SUNDAY IN THE CASTLE—THE MOVABLE TRAP—A SNARE—A RARE BRIDGE—THE SENTRY AND HIS HOUNDS—A SURPRISE—NEW HOPE!

THE stone building in the forest in which our good friend Sunday had taken refuge, was the identical place to which the king of the brigands had ordered his young prisoners to be sent for security.

He had spoken of it as the castle.

Now Sunday's first care was to fortify himself in his stronghold.

He had simply to protect himself against Petrus, the man of mystery, and the two bloodhounds.

Having made himself easy upon this point, he began to look about him to see if there was any water or food in the castle.

The upper rooms of the house bore signs of having been recently inhabited.

Upon the floors were thick Oriental carpets, that would have been of immense value in any of the European markets.

In two of the rooms which may be styled the state apartments, there were beautiful crystal chandeliers fitted with long wax candles.

In one of these rooms was a basket of lady's work—embroidery and knitting—and an open book of poems, which, together with other objects, would tend to show that the place had been hastily vacated.

Having made this casual survey, he went to the veranda and peered cautiously out.

There sat Petrus and his ferocious pets, the two bloodhounds.

Sunday chuckled.

"You'll have to wait there some time, by golly," he said with a laugh; "you no put salt on dis blackbird's tail dis journey."

He went back into the room and dropped down on to one of the luxurious couches.

"Dis am berry nice bed; wish old Monday and Massa Jack was wid dis chile."

Sunday then took out his pistols.

Both were wet.

"Dis noble chile soon make you useful," said Sunday, smiling and handling his pistols.

First he carefully drew the charges.

Then he rubbed the two pistols as dry as he could upon one of the silk curtains.

This done, he examined his powder flask.

And now he had a bit of luck, for his powder was untouched.

The water had not penetrated it.

In order to make himself the more sure of his pistols, he looked about for the means of making a fire.

So after looking about he ran downstairs and set to work to kindle a flame under some faggots that he found upon the stone hearth of one of the rooms.

Having got up a blaze, he put his pistols close to it to dry, and—

"Halloo! What's dat?"

Something startled him. Sunday did not turn pale, for that was physically impossible, but he showed unmistakable signs of alarm.

He turned towards the door and drew his knife.

A creaking noise was heard in the adjoining room, as though a door with rusty hinges had been cautiously opened.

Clutching his knife firmly, the negro stole forward.

Then as he came in sight of the room, he stood still, with his knife in his hand ready for action.

Another moment, and a trap in the floor was opened and the figure of a girl appeared there.

Sunday stared, but held his knife still ready.

The girl mounted a ladder, which Sunday could not see, and reaching the floor, peered cautiously about her.

Then she called to someone below to come on.

"Now," thought Sunday, "now or never is my time."

With two steps, or rather jumps, he was beside the girl.

One vigorous kick sent the trapdoor down.

Then planting his foot firmly upon it, he dragged the girl over it, and flourished the knife before her eyes.

"Half a word," hissed Sunday in her face—"a breath—a wink, and I'll cut yer head right off, s'lp my golly!"

The girl said nothing.

She stared at her sable captor and gasped.

And then she lay like a log in his arms.

Sunday looked around him in sheer wonderment.

It had all taken place so suddenly that he could scarcely believe it was real.

So to test the truth of it, he prodded himself with his knife in the thigh.

"Ha—whoo!" he yelled; "dat's real enough—dat's flesh and blood—yes, by golly! and hyar's de blood."

And he nearly let his lovely burden drop.

* * * * *

Hark!

"Paquita!"

"Paquita!"

"Push the door open, Harry, something has happened," said a voice beneath the trap.

"I will, Emily, if you stand out of danger."

Sunday heard all this distinctly.

"Am dis chile awake," thought Sunday, "or am he dreaming?"

There was no mistaking that voice—in fact those voices, for both were equally familiar to him.

He did not know what to do.

So first he moved his swooning burden carefully out of the way.

And then, knife in hand, to guard against all accidents, he gently raised the trap-door and looked down.

Then two voices exclaimed simultaneously:
 "Sunday!"
 "Massa Harry! By golly! am dat you?"
 "Yes, Sunday; I am glad to find you here. Lend me a hand," said Harry Girdwood.
 "By golly! and Missie Emily too?"
 "Yes, Sunday," returned little Emily; "but where's Paquita?"

"Hyar's de oder female gal," answered Sunday. "My pretty face has frightened all de brea' out of her body. If old Monday had been here, him ugly face hab frightened her to def, poor young critter."

Little Emily was already by Paquita's side, doing all she possibly could to restore her to her senses.

After a lapse of about a minute or so, she opened her eyes and looked about her.

Then her eyes dropping upon Sunday, she gave a shudder and shrank back.

"There is nothing to fear," said Girdwood, in Italian, "this is only a faithful old friend of ours, though how he has got here quite bewilders me."

"Your friend?" said Paquita, in the same language; "why, he must be connected with the—"

"The what?"

"Il Diavolo."

Harry Girdwood burst out laughing at this.

"What am Diavolo, Massa Harry?" asked Sunday.

"Why, the devil," whispered Harry, slyly. Then continued:

"There's no danger. Sunday is quite harmless."

Paquita accepted their assurances with apparent good faith, and yet seemed to have some misgivings.

"If what they say is true," she said to herself, "it is all very singular. How came this negro here?"

Had she been able to speak English, she would have understood just then the conversation that was going forward between Harry and Sunday.

A few words put him in possession of the whole of the facts.

And as soon as he knew all, he explained to Paquita.

He told her how poor Sunday had lost his way in the forest, and how he had been pursued by the twin bloodhounds of the pirate chief.

Sunday—to whom the Greek maiden was now completely reconciled—took her by the hand, and led her to the window.

"See dere, missie," said he.

She peeped cautiously out.

"There are the two beautiful dogs!" she exclaimed in rapture.

"Booful dogs!" exclaimed Sunday; "cussed tykes, Missie Brigand, dat's what I calls 'em. Why, dey try to eat dis young and tender chile."

"Then they are not particular to a trifle," said Harry Girdwood, laughing; "for you must be precious tough, Sunday."

Paquita laughed, and seemed to take great interest in all that interested Harry Girdwood.

As she looked out, her face grew suddenly thoughtful.

"Petrus with his dogs will wait," she said to Harry.

"So it seems."

"Yes, he has been sent on by my father, who will come on after with his men; and then we shall be taken."

"But you have nothing to fear. It is our lives he will take. He would never harm you."

She shook her head, and taking Harry Girdwood by the hands, said, smiling:

"No; he loves me too much. My only fears are for you."

"You must not fear on my account."

"But I do. My father is good and gentle to me, but cruel to his foes."

"I believe that," said Harry; "but still, dear young lady, we do not know for sure that they are coming."

She shook her head.

"You don't know my father," she said; "he is all powerful here, and he is sure to have Petrus followed up, sure—look there."

"Where?"

"Petrus."

Harry looked out, and then it must be confessed he was a little startled.

Petrus had taken his dogs by the chain, and dragged them nearer to him, while he held their muzzles tightly to prevent them betraying him.

The two hounds were restless, and pawed the ground impatiently to be off.

At the same time Petrus' manner showed that he had heard someone coming, and moreover, that that person was an enemy.

Petrus looked stealthily.

Then he withdrew into the covered part, right into the thicker growth of shrub and bush.

"Look!" said Harry Girdwood, excitedly; "two men are approaching."

"Where?"

"There—see!"

"I see—I see! turning the corner of the path."

"Yes."

Little Emily peered eagerly out of the window. "I see them! I see them!" she ejaculated.

And then she started and stared, while her face changed color.

"Sunday!"

"Yes, missie."

"Look!"

"Whar?"

"Don't you see who those two are?" asked Emily.

Sunday stared, and then rubbed his eyes again.

"By golly!" he cried, in wonder, "dis chile tink him ought to know dem. Ho, golly! It am Massa Harkaway."

"Yes," returned little Emily, joyously. "It is Mr. Harkaway and dear Jack."

CHAPTER XIV.

FRIENDS OR FOES—A STRANGE ALLY—THE MAN OF MYSTERY SPEAKS OUT.

AND so it was.

Jack Harkaway and his gallant boy.

"Oh! brave, good Jack," said Emily, "he will save us."

"Yes, by golly, Massa Jack chip of de old block; im fight like young giant."

As Harkaway appeared before the house, there was a commotion observed in the bushes, and then a low, ominous growl was heard.

"Steady; what was that?" ejaculated Harkaway.

"It sounded like a stifled growl," said young Jack.

"Right, boy," said Harkaway; "keep your eyes open."

"All right, dad," replied our young hero, "trust me."

"I do, Jack."

They looked to their arms carefully, and stood back to back upon the *qui vive*.

A formidable couple they were, too, this father and son.

The two Harkaways—father and son—scented danger.

Sunday, Harry Girdwood, and little Emily dare not interfere to help the Harkaways, for they ran the risk of exposing them to a surprise.

But their suspense did not last a very long time.

Suddenly the ferocious hounds broke from the care of their master, and bounded out into the open.

With three or four leaps they were upon the Harkaways, and had them upon the ground.

Emily shrieked.

Harry Girdwood dashed open the window to leap out, but before they could interfere, Petrus was there.

"Come here!" he cried, in a voice of thunder. "Desist, brutes, desist, I say!"

And he accompanied each word with a succession of blows with his fists that sent them howling back.

"Rise, gentlemen," said he, courteously, as he turned to menace the fierce bloodhounds again.

They were more surprised at this than they had been at the attack, but they quickly recovered their weapons.

"You have no need to seek your pistols," said Petrus; "my dogs will not hurt you if you give me your hands in friendship."

These words, spoken in an English accent, caused Jack Harkaway to stare in utter amazement.

"You hear? Do you not understand? I say, give me your hands to show signs of friendship, and then you will be quite safe from their fangs."

"Friendship?" echoed Harkaway, in surprise. "But can we give our hands so to you?"

"Have I shown myself an enemy to you?"

"Why, no."

"Your hands then; you shall not regret it."

He held out his hands to them as he spoke, but as they hesitated to take them, he went on:

"Well, I cannot wonder at your refusal. You see me a degraded outcast, and one of a band of pirates, but reserve your judgment and give me your hand in outward sign of friendship, to guarantee you against the attacks of my dogs. They are faithful and sagacious to friends as

they are ferocious to strangers and foes, and once you seem to have my friendship, you have nothing to fear from them."

Harkaway hesitated no longer.

Young Jack gave him a hearty grasp, and the strange brigand flushed with evident pleasure.

"Castor," he exclaimed. "Cyrus; hey, come here!"

The two fierce hounds crept slowly up.

"Nearer, sir," said Petrus, sternly; "now give this gentleman your paw."

Castor obeyed with wonderful promptitude.

"Now, sir, you."

The other followed his brother's example with great docility.

It was strange to see those great fierce brutes then, licking the hands, and fawning upon the enemies they would lately have devoured.

At this juncture the door was thrown open, and Sunday and Harry Girdwood appeared, rifle in hand.

They brought their guns to their shoulders, ready for action.

"Sunday!" ejaculated Harkaway.

"Harry!" cried young Jack, in amazement.

The docility of the bloodhounds vanished on the instant.

They crouched, and prepared to spring upon the new comers.

"Are these friends of yours?" asked Petrus, pointing to the door.

"Yes."

"Good."

"Recover arms," called out Harkaway, "and come here."

They were about to obey when Petrus interposed.

"If they are indeed your friends," said he, "and true men, let me first make sure of my dogs."

And then turning to the hounds, he bade them sternly to lie down.

Walking up to the old negro and Harry Girdwood, he extended a hand to each.

"Give me your hand," said he; "I am a friend to you."

Both obeyed.

"A very particular odd friend to dis chile," said Monday.

"Why?"

"Because you chivy dis infant half ober de blessed island with your pups."

"You are mistaken," said Petrus. "I did not mean it."

"It look most dam uncomfortable like it, by golly!"

"I merely sought to overtake you," said Petrus, "to come to that understanding which I hope to bring about now."

"This man is a friend," said Harkaway, who was thoroughly convinced by Petrus' manner of his honesty of purpose.

Sunday accepted this as an order from his master, and a general reconciliation was brought about.

"How came you here?" said Harkaway.

"How did you manage your escape," demanded young Jack, eagerly.

"Have you any news of Emily?" asked Harkaway.

"Is she still in the brigand's clutches?" asked young Jack.

Fast as they showered the questions upon them, Harry Girdwood found means of replying.

"No. Emily is safe, and here she comes to answer for herself."

"Jack!"

Young Jack flew to the door as Emily appeared, and catching her in his arms, he showed his joy at her escape by kissing her until her blushing cheeks recalled him to a sense of decorum.

"After you, Jack," said his father, taking Emily by the hand and kissing her.

"But who is this?" demanded young Jack, pointing to the door, where the brigand's daughter lingered as if unwilling to disturb the harmony of the scene.

"Paquita?"

"Yes," said Harry Girdwood, "it is Paquita, the daughter of the terrible Monastos. It is to her kindness we owe everything—perhaps our very lives."

Emily ran back to her new-found friend, and, placing her arm around her waist, led her gently forward.

"Jack," said Harry Girdwood, "she saved your life too."

"Mine?"

"Yes."

"How?"

"At the moment when Monastos had you bound to the gun, she led us out of his clutches

and placed herself in our power in order to frighten her tyrant father into sparing you."

And then followed a full explanation of what the reader already knows concerning the manner of their escape from the brigand's cavern by the river.

Young Jack was thoroughly overcome by the recital.

But his father, having discovered in what tongue they could understand each other, made her the warmest acknowledgments upon their joint behalf.

"Receive a father's heartfelt thanks, my dear young lady," said he, with deep emotion, "for saving the lives of my son and of our friends."

Paquita smiled her reply to Harkaway.

It was indeed a happy reunion to all the party.

* * * * *

During the foregoing scene, Petrus, the man of mystery, looked sternly on.

He seemed like one in a dream.

"Why do you side with your father's enemies, young lady?" said he, advancing towards her.

"Because my father would have behaved cruelly to them."

"But do you know what the consequences of this will be?"

"My conscience acquits me of all blame," returned Paquita; "I should do the same again if the same opportunity offered itself."

A smile lighted up his countenance.

"Your conscience tells you right, young lady," said he.

"I know it."

"Follow its dictates ever; and some day I will impart an important secret to you."

Suddenly the conversation was rudely interrupted by Sunday.

"By golly! Massa Harry," he exclaimed, "s'pose some of dem fellers gets up de chimbley, too?"

"The chimney?"

"Yes, sar; de flue, sar."

"The flue?"

"Yes, sar."

The party looked at each other for an explanation.

"Why, didn't you all come up a hole in de floor?" said Sunday, indignantly.

Thereupon, Harry Girdwood burst out laughing.

"Oh! that's what you call the flue."

"Yes, sar."

"We did."

"S'pose den, Massa Harry, dat dem piraticle beasts plays a lily game at follow my leader up de hole in de floor, and give dis chile bullet, he get de belly ache, by golly!"

"You are right, Sunday," cried Harkaway; "we must take precaution, and at once, or the pirates will take us all by surprise by forcing their way through the flue, as you call it."

Until Sunday's opportune but unpleasant suggestion cropped up, they had thought only of looking out for enemies from the woods.

Harry Girdwood led the way into the house.

Petrus, in the meanwhile, tethered Castor to the door-post, while he brought the other dog in with him.

"Twas well he did so."

Following the party to the inner chamber in which was the trap-door in the floor, he found that they had already passed through it, and were anxiously peering down.

"Well, can you hear any sounds below?"

"No."

"All is safe for the present."

"Good."

"But every precaution must certainly be taken now."

Petrus did not appear satisfied with their investigation; he preferred taking observations for himself.

"Hey, Cyrus, boy, come here! Stand you there on guard, good dog."

The dog obeyed.

"Listen there for anyone coming, and if you fail to warn us in due time of danger, I'll kill you."

The hound replied to his master's exhortation by an intelligent wag of the tail.

This settled, they went around the house to examine the various apartments, and in one of the upper rooms Petrus delighted the party by discovering a cupboard, concealed from the casual glance, which was amply stocked with wines and fruit, and some welcome eatables.

"You can sit and regale at your ease," said Petrus.

"We must not be surprised," said Harkaway.

Petrus smiled.

"No fear of that."

"Sure?"

"Quite; the sentinels I have posted will keep better guard than the most reliable soldiers we could ever have."

Thus reassured by Petrus, they partook of the various delicacies that the house afforded.

"Before we proceed further, tell me," said Harkaway, "how came you, an Englishman, to be here with such miscreants as are Monastos and his gang of brigands?"

As Harkaway spoke, a sickly expression flitted across the other one's face.

"It would take too long at present," he replied grimly, "to tell the whole tale of my woes, to relate the horrors that I have gone through during my captivity here; but as we are strangers, and as some particulars are due to you, if only in proof of my good faith, I will put my sad history into the briefest possible form."

"Did I understand you aright?" said Harkaway; "did you say captivity?"

"Yes."

"Has it lasted long?"

"Five years."

"How have you lived it through?"

"By looking forward to this day," replied Petrus, with a flushed cheek and flashing eyes. "The hour that I have been praying for, sighing for, weeping for, has come at last, and my deliverance will be brought about exactly as I've seen it in my dreams."

"But why did you not rise up against your oppressors? You are an Englishman. I should have slain my tyrant, if my body had been hacked piecemeal the next moment."

"I will tell you why," replied Petrus; "my vengeance could not be satisfied by his death. Had he a hundred lives, and could lose each by slow torture, it would not satisfy me. On this island is a treasure of fabulous wealth, that has been got together by this man-monster, the labor of a life of crime."

"I know it," said Harkaway.

"Each ounce of gold," continued Petrus, "represents broken hearts, sighs, tears—ay, tears of blood; every imaginable crime. To lose this treasure would pain this monster far more than the thought of death, for he is physically brave. Now, it shall be my task to let him know he is losing it; to wring his heart; to let him drain the bitter cup to the very dregs, and then devote my whole life to making his end wretched, a horror, one long degradation, as mine has been; ay, a long death. I would—"

"Hark!"

"What was that?"

"Listen. Did you not hear?"

"Massa Harkaway," cried Sunday, running in.

"What is it? Danger?"

"Yes, sar. The dog at the flue hears suffink."

It was true.

Cyrus had given his note of warning.

A low growl.

"Come," said Petrus, moving towards the door, "we have work before us now. We may in a few moments be surrounded by the pirates of this island."

And they followed him in anxious expectancy to the chamber below.

CHAPTER XV.

THE PIRATE CHIEF'S GRIEF—BOLD RESOLUTIONS—THE WARNING—A SURPRISE—AN OLD FRIEND IS FOUND FULL OF SPIRITS—MOLE IN A NEW CHARACTER; THAT OF TARGET.

THE pirate, or King Monastos, as he liked to be called, was in distress about Paquita.

Heartless ruffian as he was, this pirate had one soft place in his heart. Paquita filled it.

It was most remarkable to see a girl brought up in the midst of cruelty, brutality, and vice, and yet preserve her purity of mind and her gentle, guileless nature.

Yet so it was.

And this, perhaps, it was, that so made the despotic brigand's heart yearn towards her.

She was so utterly unlike any one with whom he came in contact, that he looked upon her as a superior being altogether.

Her singular disappearance completely unmanned him.

Presently he would fall cursing the English adventurers.

"I'll kill them all—all! To the last one they shall die!" he cried aloud, shaking his clenched fists in the intense bitterness of his wrath.

"Ho, there!" he shouted after awhile; "where is Dimitri?"

"He is away."

"Where?"

"Conducting the prisoners to the castle by your orders, captain."

A smile of fiendish triumph lit up the brigand's face.

"We must be up and doing!" he exclaimed, arousing himself; "let the worst come to the worst, we will show our teeth, and then let them beware of Monastos, the king of the brigands."

"We have received no news yet, captain, of your daughter."

Monastos made a gesture of impatience.

"Oh, if I had those English devils in my power, I would grind their lives out by slow torture! but my Paquita must not be lost to me."

* * * * *

"You have got the boy safe, captain?" demanded one of the band.

"Yes, under a strong guard; but we must be ready for action, or these English will escape."

A dozen chosen men were armed and got ready to sally out into the woods in search of the enemy.

Besides the dozen men there were three trusty scouts who preceded the party a considerable distance, and with whom a series of signals were arranged.

In this way they proceeded a considerable distance when they heard the sound of a parrot.

"That's Monastos; he imitates a parrot perfectly," said one of the pirates.

These children of the forest and mountain-side possessed wonderful powers of imitation.

The pirate's reply was the shrill call of a bird, which no one would have thought possible to have emanated from a human throat.

Then came the countersign from Monastos.

The code of signals were perfect.

Monastos joined again his band.

"Let no sound be heard; all depends upon surprising the enemy."

They were passing along a sort of natural lane, with tall forest trees bordering it, beyond which was a large open glade.

Suddenly Monastos stopped short.

"Hush!"

He held up his hand in warning; for close by they could hear the sound of voices.

"We have them now," said Monastos.

He made a sign to his followers to spread themselves out, and silently, noiselessly they obeyed orders.

Each man took up his post behind a tree and slowly prepared arms.

Then they turned to their captain.

They wanted fresh orders.

But a faint noise in the thicket caused them to suspend operations for a moment.

Looking in the direction of the sound, they saw a neatly-turned piece of wood passed gently through the foliage.

This was surmounted by a trouser leg.

Then came a human frame, dragging after it a second wooden member, the exact counterpart of the first.

The brigands stared amazed at this strange figure, but the strange figure in question was all unconscious of the excitement his presence was creating.

In fact, he hugged himself in the belief that he was quite alone.

First he looked over his shoulders, and then he gave a sort of comfortable sigh as he drew from his pocket a black bottle, which had been his constant companion and trusty friend in many a distant clime.

Gently he withdrew the cork.

Then he wiped the neck of the bottle with the cuff of his coat, and took a gentle pull.

"How unpleasant it is to be surrounded by such a suspicious set of people. I verily believe that some of them would suspect their own mothers of taking strong waters on the sly."

He sucked again.

"It was a happy thought of mine," murmured this singular person, who was no other than our old friend Mole, "to offer to mount this guard, for I can keep careful watch, and take my drop of comfort at the same time."

He washed down this observation with another gentle pull at the black bottle.

"Come what will," said Mole, "I am determined that the success of this expedition shall be due to my courage and forethought."

He solaced himself once more with that little black bottle.

"Halloo! what noise is that?" and he hastily clapped the bottle in his breast-pocket, and looked up.

"Why," he gasped again, "what does all this mean?"

And well he might ask.

He found himself the target for twelve long-barrelled guns, and all the twelve so close to him that there was not the faintest hope of their missing their aim.

Isaac Mole tried to cry out. He could not. He thought he was a dead man this time. The brigands closed upon him until the tips of their musket barrels touched him. The cold sweat poured down his back, for every instant he expected to receive the contents of those twelve gun barrels in his devoted carcase. Suddenly he found his tongue, and at a moment that they certainly did not expect it. Mole gave a loud yell, and then he fell forward flat on his face.

CHAPTER XVI.

GUERRILLA WARFARE—THE ARKANSAS DUEL ON A LARGE SCALE—MOLE IN ANOTHER NEW PART; THAT OF MAIL ARMOR!

WHAT ensued was gone through with wonderful rapidity.

"Halloo, there! is that you, Mole, yelling out for help?"

The next moment, Jefferson made a rush forward.

And then a surprise awaited him. The band of Monastos, with admirable precision, wheeled around at a sign from their chief, and turned their guns upon Jefferson.

The latter looked and stared as though suddenly bereft of his senses.

Seven of the guns were pointing at him. "Treed, by gum!" exclaimed the American giant.

But he did not give in.

Suddenly he darted around, sprang back into the bushes, and rolling back, disappeared before they could say "Jack Robinson," or its equivalent in Greek.

"Take a tree, every mother's son of you," he cried to his friends, who were advancing, "or you'll be catawampously chawed up by the pirates."

They needed no second warning. In the twinkling of an eye, Harkaway's party sought refuge behind trees.

"Be cautious, lads, and don't pop your heads out too soon," cried Jefferson.

And then began an Arkansas duel upon a very extensive scale.

Not another word was spoken for several minutes.

Then suddenly the silence was broken by the sharp crack of a rifle, and Yanni, the pirate chief's favorite, was dropped.

"That's a chalk to me, Jeff," said Magog Brand, complacently.

"Bravo, Magog!" returned Jefferson.

But as he spoke, he was busy fixing his own quarry, and before the echo of Magog's shot had died away, there was a second report, and down dropped another of the brigands.

This was warm work for the Greeks.

But Monastos was equal to the task.

He made a sudden grab at Mr. Mole's collar, and dragged him up, rested his own rifle over his prisoner's shoulder, and kept him as a shield in front of himself.

But Mole soon slipped down, and the consequence was that Monastos emptied both barrels upon the enemy, but missed ignominiously in both cases.

Dick Harvey made his presence felt then.

No sooner did he catch sight of the commanding figure of Monastos than he marked him for his own.

With fatal deliberation he took aim.

"Now then, Mr. Mole," he shouted, as Monastos once more dragged Mole to his feet, "drop to the ground when I give the word. Now!"

Mole dropped; but it was not in obedience to Dick's order.

Fear seemed to have got possession of him to such an extent that it took all the power out of his body, and appeared actually to infect his wooden legs.

At that very instant, Dick pulled the trigger.

Monastos staggered back, clapping his hand to his shoulder.

"He's potted!" ejaculated Jefferson.

"A good shot, Harvey," said Magog Brand.

But the Greeks were not beaten, by any means; they set up a cry of alarm, when they saw their leader hit, but they kept to their work.

A second shot from the English party whizzed unpleasantly close to Monastos' royal ear.

"Curses on you all!" he cried.

Then stooping down, he grasped poor Isaac Mole firmly by the shoulders, and without any great difficulty, he lifted him up and trotted him, pig-a-back, across the open.

Mole yelled. He struggled and kicked, and he galled his captor's legs with the spikes with which his wooden pins were tipped.

Captor and captive were suffering after their fashion, at the same time.

Another shot was fired, and Mr. Mole gave a wild, unearthly yell.

Was he struck?

Evidently. Else, why did he kick and wiggle so wildly upon the back of his captor?

"Here," cried the chief to one of his men, throwing poor Mole on the ground, "pick up this wretched Englishman, and carry him to our cave."

A savage-looking brigand then threw Mole on his back and commenced to trot away with him.

But Mole was not to be taken off so easily, for he began to probe the calves of the man's legs with his spikes.

"Keep still!" roared the brigand, as he trudged on.

"Oh-o! Aha!"

"Quiet, you English dog!"

"Aha—oho!" cried Mole.

"If you scratch my leg with your toe-nails, like that, I'll have your nails drawn with pin-cers," said the amiable brigand.

"Oho!"

"Be still!"

"I can't."

"Then I shall have the pleasure of cutting your throat," said the brigand.

"Beast!" returned Mr. Mole, with great readiness, "you know I am wounded."

"Are you hit?"

"Yes."

"Where?"

"Where? In the rear; I can't stand in comfort on these timber pins, and now I shall never be able to sit down again."

"We shan't want you to," answered the brigand, trotting on.

"I shall, though," groaned Mole.

"Oh, no; we shall lay you down," said the man.

"Lay me down? Wh—wh—where? Don't jiggle-joggle so. Let me try and walk."

The brigand, who seemed in no way incommodated by his burden, made a goat-like skip, upon finding how much his prisoner was suffering—so gratified was he at the thought—and trotted on.

"Where shall we lay you down, my friend? I'll tell you," and he dropped into a sharp trot; "we shall find you a nice soft bit of earth, *caro mio*, and dig down, a good six or eight feet, English measurement, for your earthy bed, and then—"

Mole gasped.

"And then?"

"And then we shall drop you in, whether you are alive or dead."

"Oh—h—h!"

"Yes, my brave Englishman," said the brigand, "we shall find you a good deep grave, and cover you up with good solid earth; so let me advise you to die quickly before reaching your last bedroom—it will be better for you. Ha-ha!"

"Oh, Jerusalem!" cried Mole, "you don't mean to bury me alive. I say, old fellow, stop a bit, and take a little drop out of my bottle."

"Oh, no," said the brigand; "I intend to give you a drop, and that very soon, in your deep grave; I can then help myself out of your bottle."

"You horrid vagabond," cried Mole, trying to wriggle himself out of the brigand's grasp, "let me go."

In this way poor Mole was trotted off to captivity.

Poor Mole!

Bit by bit, leg by leg, he had been disappearing from the scene.

And now it looked sadly like a wholesale vanishing of the rest of his tough old hide.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE MYSTERIOUS RETREAT—CAMPING OUT—THE NIGHT WATCH—ASLEEP ON HIS POST—MESSENGER MIKE.

HARKAWAY's party waited in security behind the trees for some few minutes.

They did not like waiting.

One of the party stole out, and they expected every moment that a bullet would check his temerity.

No.

Not a sound was heard—not a whisper—much less the ugly whistle of a bullet.

What could it mean?

After waiting for some few minutes, with every nerve in his body tingling with the subdued excitement, Magog Brand stole out.

"Hist! Magog, hist!" exclaimed Jefferson, "keep back, or you will be a dead man."

Magog Brand's reply was brief but expressive. "Pickles!"

"Are you mad?" said Jefferson. "Come back, I say."

"No; I'll face the brigands."

He stepped out into the open as if there was nothing to fear, as though he had the utmost contempt for their adversaries, who were, truth to tell, anything but contemptible marksmen.

He walked forward with gun in hand, as though he bore a charmed life against rifle bullets.

"Silly fellow!" exclaimed poor Jefferson, "this will be the last appearance on any stage of Magog Brand."

But Magog was not to die yet.

Nor was there any opportunity of ascertaining whether he bore a charmed life or not.

His appearance beyond the shelter of the trees excited no attention on the part of the enemy.

The strange silence alarmed the party as much, or more, than their firing.

They expected the enemy was concocting some surprise.

He made direct for a wide-spreading tree, from which the hottest fire had come during the skirmish.

And then turning around, he shouted out to his companion:

"The skunks have gone!"

"What?"

"Bolted, by Jove!"

Jefferson could not credit the announcement thus briefly conveyed.

"Impossible!"

"Come and see; there is not a brigand in sight."

Although his words and manner implied a doubt, yet he showed pretty clearly that he accepted it in good faith by marching out into the open.

And then he ascertained the truth for himself. The brigands were indeed gone.

All had disappeared.

"Well!" cried Jefferson, in amazement, "I thought to have potted a few more of the vagabonds."

"We are doubled on this time," said Brand.

"So it seems."

"But what of poor old Mole?"

"Poor Mole!"

They were sincere in this, for in spite of his drawbacks, Mole was a favorite with all, and now it seemed as though death, perhaps a cruel death, was about to snatch their old friend from them, for the brigands, they knew, would have no mercy on poor Mole.

"Poor old fellow," said Harvey, sadly; "I fear that I shall never laugh over your tricks again."

Jefferson shook his head mournfully.

"I fear not."

"At any rate, there is this to be said, Mole as a prisoner will be no trifling incumbrance, and will so far impede their movements that I've no doubt we shall be able to come up with them."

"I hope so."

"And I."

"We shall see."

"In what direction do you think they can have gone?"

"Humph! that is a question that requires some considerable thought."

It did, indeed, for the brigands had not left the faintest traces behind them, or the least indication that could aid the English party.

Amongst the latter were several experienced trappers and hunters, who were voted especially to the service of recovering the trail.

These gentlemen had for years led a life of adventure in the backwoods of America, and were consequently the very men to employ upon the present service.

But their task was one of no ordinary difficulty, for the retreat of the brigands had been made through the woods, where they had to hunt in vain for footsteps.

For half-a-mile around their present camping place they searched diligently.

But in vain.

Not a trace.

Not the faintest clew to help them.

Or stay, we were wrong in saying not the faintest clew, for they labored under what may be described as the exactly opposite disadvantage.

There were too many traces—too many clews.

In other words, their examination of the ground convinced them that the party of brigands had broken up and scattered in all directions.

This was a puzzle.

They held a general consultation upon it. "We have scattered them," said one of the party—a young American, called Hiram Lee; "there can be no two opinions about that, I should say."

"No."

"The victory is ours."

"Yes, it is a rout," added another enthusiast. Harvey smiled.

"Not that," he said; "or else they would not have carried off the prisoner so easily."

"Poor Mole!"

"My opinion," said Jefferson, "is rather that they have scattered with the express purpose of throwing us off the scent, and have probably rejoined at a little distance off."

This was the most likely supposition.

All agreed to this.

Taking that for granted—

"Jefferson," said Dick Harvey, "the best thing for us to do is to keep our largest weather eye open, and look out for squalls."

"True."

"They will probably return in force and endeavor to surprise us."

"Probably."

"Well, then," said Magog Brand, "all I have to say is this. If, with that belief in our minds, we suffer ourselves to be surprised, we deserve the worst that can possibly befall us."

"Right."

"Agreed."

"Let us take every possible precaution to guard against it."

"We will."

"In the first place, let us take opinions about our next step."

"Good."

"You put the question, Harvey, for our consideration," said Jefferson.

"Hear—hear!"

"In the first place, then," said Dick, "what is to be done? Shall we camp here and fortify this position, or move on?"

"Camp here," cried several.

"Let us examine well the two questions before we decide," said Dick.

"Go on."

"If we remain here, there is this advantage; Harkaway will better be able to find us out."

"True, if he lives."

"Oh, he is safe enough," said Dick; "Jack and I have got through worse scrapes than this, I promise you."

"Doubtless; and I am no croaker of evil," said Jefferson; "but I confess that I would give a tall pile of dollars to shake hands with Jack Harkaway at this moment."

"Give me your hand, Jeff," said Dick, earnestly; "you're a good fellow—a true pal, and one of the luckiest days in my life was when I fell across you."

Jefferson returned the grasp warmly.

"On the contrary, my boy," he said, "you and brave Jack Harkaway have made life endurable for us—eh, Magog?"

"Rather," responded the dwarf quickly.

"Why, Jefferson and I were dying of sloth—quietly humbugging each other with idleness and expiring of ennui; Harvey, my boy, you and Harkaway are our benefactors."

"Well, old fellow, I and Jack will never forget how you fought for us in the New York gaming house."

* * * * *

"The disadvantage of staying here," said Hiram Lee, "is that the brigands, knowing the spot, will make their arrangements accordingly."

"True."

"March on, then."

"That is what I was coming to," said Dick.

"Let us examine the ground about," said one of the party, "and if we find any place more suitable, we can camp there, and yet keep a sharp look-out for friends or foes."

"Good."

A diligent search was made, and they selected a spot on high ground, yet sheltered by heavy timber, which commanded a view for some little distance.

This settled, Dick set to work, making secure arrangements for the coming night.

"I'll show you now," said he, "how I and my old friend Jack used to fortify our position when attacked by Indians years ago."

This was watched with considerable curiosity. Firstly, he set his friends and himself to work to chop off some branches of the nearest trees.

With these he had the ground strewn all around, covering a circumference, or rather the openings in it, of about a hundred feet.

Besides this, he fastened thin slips of willow from tree to tree, at about a foot from the

ground, a very dangerous obstacle to men creeping on the ground in the dark.

By the time that this was done, it became necessary to post the sentries for the night.

Then they ate their cold supper, and washed it down with the contents of their ample flasks.

"Now," said Magog, "as my watch begins an hour hence, I'll take a snooze."

When he had snored gracefully for half an hour, he was awake by something soft and warm, brushing against his face.

Then there was something both cold and damp.

"Harvey!" he said, sitting bolt upright,

"Dick! Jefferson!"

"Halloo! What now?"

"Any alarm?"

"No."

They were already on their feet, rifles in hand, and upon the look-out.

"What is it?"

"Our friend come back," replied Magog, with a chuckle.

"Surely not Harkaway?" gasped Harvey.

"No."

"I thought it was too good," he said.

"Yes; but we have our four-footed postman back with news."

"What, Mike?"

"Yes."

And then everyone had a kind word for that luckiest of lucky dogs.

They lit a lantern and took observations of Master Mike.

Around his neck was fastened a letter written by Mrs. Harkaway and by Mrs. Harvey.

It was brief and to the purpose.

"We hope you have got Emily safe with you by this time, and that our foolish boys have not been running risks in this dreadful place. We are full of anxiety. Monday is nearly well. Unless you are soon back, he will start after you. As it is, we have all our work to do to restrain his impatience, and poor Ada is in a constant state of worry about him. That darling Mike is the prince of dogs. If he gets safely to you with this, he shall have a collar of gold and jewels, and feed upon all the dainties in the land, if once we escape from this desert. Oh, pray return at once."

* * * * *

Dick had but just finished the letter, when Mike was seen to prick up his ears and look sharply around.

Magog Brand watched him eagerly.

"That's my post," he said to himself.

So out he crept upon all fours towards the sentry whom he was to replace.

And the first thing he saw here filled him with wrath and indignation.

The solitude and the fatigue together had been too much for the sentry.

He was leaning upon the muzzle of his rifle, and in this position he was half dozing.

He was not, strictly speaking, asleep, but he had suffered the drowsiness so far to conquer him that he did not hear Magog Brand's approach.

Suddenly the dwarf was startled by a sound close beside him.

It was like the cocking of firearms—of a rifle or a pistol.

An alarming sound.

Magog did not wait to consider.

This was time for acting—not thought.

To pause was to be lost.

He dropped his rifle and took out his bowie knife.

"This is like Paddy's shillelah," he said to himself. "It never misses fire."

Creeping through the brushwood, he suddenly saw before him the tall form of one of the Greek brigands watching the sleepy sentinel.

In his hands he carried a gun that he was just upon the point of bringing to his shoulder.

He was a huge fellow, and he took a slow and deliberate aim.

The sentry was about to pay for his negligence.

He was doomed.

"Now!" said Magog to himself, "now is my time."

Gripping his long knife nervously, he stole forward.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HOW MAGOG BRAND STOPPED AN INTRUDER—ADVENTURE ON THE MARCH—WAR'S ALARMS.

MAGOG BRAND was, figuratively speaking, all there.

He meant mischief.

You might see this by the vicious look about the corners of his mouth and the peculiar expression of his eyes.

It was not a long job for him, however.

Three or four strides brought him close to his man.

And then gathering up his strength for a big effort, he leaped upon the unsuspecting Greek from behind.

"Ugh!"

And that was about all the brigand said.

Magog was short, sharp and decisive in his action.

Before the man could struggle much, that murderous long knife was buried up to the very hilt in his neck.

The windpipe was severed—it choked his utterance, and down he dropped upon the ground.

Two sharp strokes of the knife—right and then left—and what a few moments before had been a huge muscular body, full of life and vigor, was now a hideous, headless trunk.

Now this was accomplished without noise—and the sentry, whose life had been in danger, was actually unaware of what had taken place.

This horrible feat was barely accomplished when Magog was startled by the sound of someone advancing in that direction.

The stockade which Dick Harvey had suggested betrayed the approach, for the dried twigs were crushed beneath a heavy foot.

Magog glanced up, and catching sight of the outline of a tall figure, he felt that it was high time to beat a retreat.

But before going, he hit upon a novel defense.

Catching up the head of his victim he hurled it with all his force in the direction of the new comer.

It was a good aim.

The reeking missile struck the man as he was coming on, and brought him to a sudden stop.

Then Magog snatched up the slaughtered brigand's gun and scampered back, just as the astonished sentry opened his sleepy eyes and gazed about him.

"On guard!" ejaculated the dwarf in a stage whisper.

"All right."

"It is now."

And back he scrambled to the camp.

Harvey and Jefferson were wide awake.

They had missed Magog, and were wondering what could have become of him; so that they saw him back again with considerable sensations of relief.

"Anything wrong?" demanded Jefferson.

"Not much."

"Are you hurt?"

"No."

"Why, what is that blood on you?—you are covered."

"So I am," replied the little man coolly; "but it is not mine."

"Whose, then?"

"Another of the Greek brigands," was Magog's reply.

He thought no more of killing a brigand than he would of shooting a wolf.

"I was just in time," he explained; "our sentry was asleep on his post. I heard someone coming, so I crept and cut off one man's head and threw it at another. It saves powder and shot, you see."

His hearers stared.

And then when they got at the real truth of it, they shuddered at the recital.

Be that as it may, it saved the rest of the party.

For a craftily-planned surprise, the work of Monastos himself, was frustrated by Magog's courage; for when the gory head fell at the advancing brigand's feet, it filled him with horror and fear.

The man whom the desperate dwarf had thus cut down, was one of the best and boldest of the brigands, and as soon as Monastos was told what had happened, he ordered the retreat to be sounded.

And then it was agreed that they must give it up for that night.

"We are discovered," said Monastos. "We are bunglers, and growing unworthy of our names, when we cannot conduct an attack at night with more prudence than has been displayed this time."

The brigands slept very little that night.

The watches of Harkaway's party were doubled, and this left but three men unoccupied.

These three men were Dick Harvey, Jefferson, and Magog Brand.

* * * * *

Morning dawned.

The three sleepers woke up in a general state of alarm.

Their first impulse was to feel for their weapons.

"It's all right; no more brigands to decapitate."

They shook themselves together, and trotted about hither and thither to the various posts, for the purpose of shaking off their drowsiness, and of ascertaining at the same time if their men were all safe.

Their cheeks were rather pale, and their eyes were rather bloodshot for want of rest.

In other respects all was as well as could be wished.

Magog Brand kindled the fire and boiled some water that they got from a neighboring spring, in a tin pannikin which he carried in his knapsack, and with this he prepared some coffee.

And then a grand feast was held of cold meat, bread, and hot coffee.

They had been anxiously waiting for the reappearance of Harkaway, senior.

One and all of the party missed him sadly, and now at last they began to fear that something dreadful had happened to him.

"The skunks shall suffer for all that we suffer," said Jefferson, bitterly.

"They shall, we swear!"

A general chorus of voices showed that they were all agreed upon this point.

If harm should have befallen Jack Harkaway or his boy, then woe betide the Greek brigands.

Here was a party of bold and desperate men, all meaning to protect each other; and if evil should happen to one or the other of them, the rest were pledged to fight with the avowed object of exterminating Monastos and his band of brigands.

They grew impatient of remaining inactive, and so they resolved to march on in search of Harkaway, and of adventure generally.

One of their advanced guards or beaters started a Greek scout just upon the skirts of a wood, and as soon as the Englishmen perceived him they gave their view halloo, and started off in pursuit, and when they had got about a hundred yards, they saw that the Greek was distancing them fast.

Run as fast as they could, the brigand lengthened the gap between them at every stride.

"He mustn't escape," said Jefferson.

"Not quite, Jeff," said his little friend.

They were of one mind upon this head.

Both had stopped in the chase influenced by the same idea; they meant to put a stop to his flight by an ounce of lead.

Magog Brand being loaded first, knelt, took a steady aim and pulled the trigger.

They watched for the result of the shot with some anxiety.

But no use.

He was not touched.

On he ran faster than ever.

Jefferson knelt and had his turn now.

The big American was a crack shot with the rifle.

Jefferson pulled the trigger, and the fugitive bounded into the air.

"Hit!"

"Potted!"

"Spiked!"

Such were the ejaculations of the lookers-on.

They thought he was brought down for good; but although the unlucky man fell, evidently struck by Jefferson's bullet, yet he was not seriously damaged; not too seriously, that is, to prevent his resuming his flight.

He clapped his hand to his side—thus indicating his hurt, and flew on with as much speed and energy as before.

"Halloo!"

"Winged him only."

"He's badly hurt, though," said Dick, "I can see by his run."

"Then he's ours."

"Doubtless."

But they reckoned without their host, for once.

By the time that they got another five minutes upon the way, the fugitive Greek, wounded as he was, had contrived to get clean off.

* * * * *

Suddenly they were startled by the sound of firearms.

First a single shot, then a straggling volley, and then followed a well-sustained though not very regular fire.

A very warm engagement was going forward close at hand.

"I can hear our rifles going it," said Dick Harvey. "I know the ring of them too well to be mistaken."

"You're right, Dick, there," exclaimed Jefferson.

"We shall have some fighting now," said Dick.

"Rather," exclaimed Magog Brand, "and hang me if I am going to miss it."

"Nor I!"

"Nor I!"

"Forward then. Look to your rifles and pistols all around, and let us get on to the fighting ground, wherever it is."

[THE END.]

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